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The WATER SCANDAL

A STORY OF POLITICAL & MUNICIPAL CORRUPTION

HORACE T. BARNABY

1- Fiction, American

"The purpose of the gang is to fleece Wallers out of a few hundred thousand of his dollars."—*Page 187.*

THE WATER SCANDAL

A Story of Political and Municipal Graft and Corruption

BY

HORACE T. BARNABY, Jr.

SHAW PUBLISHING COMPANY

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

1910
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THE DECADE

I.

A COUNTRY HOME.

ABOUT twenty miles out from the Industrial City, on one of the main branches of the Pennsylvania System, there is a beautiful little village by the name of Wayfield. It is a typical town of the North Central States, having the usual business and thrift of an American suburban commercial centre.

Its streets are straight and well graded; the lots of the village were surveyed and platted in beautiful order, and upon them have been built residences, large and small, magnificent and plain, all of which are both modern and attractive. The town fathers many years ago set rows of maple trees along each side of every street, and in their growth they have enveloped the town with a verdure that transforms the village during the summer season into a veritable park, and it is putting it very moderately to say that it is, indeed, a pretty place.

Just a short distance north of town, in a gracefully winding valley, flows the little

stream known as Rabbit river. A short distance beyond the river stands the old familiar landmark known as the home of Uncle Reuben Haynes and his faithful wife, Aunt Lydia.

It was one beautiful July morning less than a score of years ago, and it was just such a day as one might wish would continue forever. The plentiful warm rain that had fallen during the preceding night had freshened and purified the sultry atmosphere, and every growing thing seemed to stretch forth to the glory of Him, the author of nature's laws. Out from the leafy bowers, where nested myriads of birds of different species, came an unceasing chattering and warbling that ought to thrill one with inspiration and satisfy the longings of the most exacting student of nature. From the barnyard and vicinity came the mingled voices of crowing cocks and cackling hens that seemed to vie with the guinea fowls in their efforts to make the greatest noise; from the orchard came the chirping of a flock of turkeys as they relentlessly pursued the coveted grasshopper; and from his perch on the barnyard gate, the proud peacock in full plumage punctuated the ever varying sounds with his shrill, unearthly voice, while ever and anon

from down across the meadow the listening ear caught the clattering music of the ancient bell that never failed to call to memory suggestions of the scenes of childhood—driving home the cows. Oh, give me a farm! My kingdom for a farm! A farm and contentment—the greatest combination on earth.

Uncle Reuben and Aunt Lydia were at breakfast. They were unusually late on this particular morning; for Uncle Reuben had feared that it would rain, and with hired help he worked long into the night of the previous day in order to secure the last of his wheat crop within the shelter of the old barn, and a feeling of satisfaction and contentment had induced him to linger upon his comfortable bed much later than was his practice. Then, in the hustle and hurry of the previous evening the barn-yard gate was left open and old Darby, the bell cow, had led the whole herd to the farthest corner of the fallow so that, when at last they sat down to breakfast, Uncle Reuben remarked with an air of surprise and disappointment that it was "nearly nine o'clock."

"So it is," replied Aunt Lydia, nervously glancing at the clock upon the mantel, "and this hull blessed mornin' has gone by and

I hain't got nothin' done yet. A feller never knows when to take it easy. I was in no hurry gettin' up, 'cause I thought you wouldn't be in a hurry this mornin' on account of the wet, and I knew I had everything ready to get breakfast quick. But when I came out here in the kitchen this mornin', that big gray cat with the two white feet was clear up on that third shelf with her head in the milk pitcher, and when she heard me upon the floor, she jumped; but her head was pretty big for the pitcher, and in pullin' it out, she knocked the pitcher off onto the floor and broke it, and the milk flew all over everything. Look, what a grease spot on my clean floor that I mopped pretty near the last thing last night! Then, I went to put the potatoes over that I peeled while you and the men were drawing in the last load last night, and the rag had come out of the hole in the pan and let the water all leak out makin' a muss on the floor, and the potatoes were all turned black and I had to peel them all over again. Then I went out and found the cover had blown off the coop that I had my little ducks in; and the rain had drownded five of them, and four of the others are nearly dead—at least all wet and chilled,

and I've got 'em in that market basket by the stove. There is only six left in the coop. It beats all how everything seems to go wrong all in a bunch sometimes. But a fellow might as well keep a stiff upper lip an' try to smile a little an' do the best she can, I s'pose. And then to top it all off, you remember that little lookin' glass that Harvey gave me for a Christmas present, just before he went away to school? Well, it hung on the wall just above that little shelf in the bed-room, and I guess I set the lamp a little too close to it, for it cracked clear across it."

"Well, well," replied Uncle Reuben, "you have had quite a time haven't you. But then, I don't 'spose that lookin'-glass cost much, 'cause it wasn't more'n six inches one way by ten t'other."

"Yes, Reuben, but it isn't that so much; you see it was a present from Harvey, and I thought more of it for that than anything else; and then, it's a bad sign to break a lookin' glass. They say it's a sign that there'll be a death in the family inside of a year."

"Pooh-h-h!" Uncle Reuben did not believe in signs, yet he always planted potatoes

in the old of the moon in May, depended on the signs of the moon very largely for his promises of fair weather, and worried a great deal when he put his new roof on the barn for fear that the signs were not right and that the shingles might warp in consequence thereof.

"Pooh-h-h! If you want to, Reuben Haynes; but I know of some instances where that very accident happened, and the very feller what broke the glass died that same winter."

"Who was that?"

"It was that James Leonard's father what used to live over on the town line between Thornapple and Yankee Springs when I was a little girl."

"He was a pretty old man, wasn't he, Lydia?"

"About eighty-seven."

"Well, it is strange that the old man should break a lookin' glass and die, all the same year."

Uncle Reuben's sarcasm was wasted on Aunt Lydia, for she did not notice it and interpret it in the light it was offered; but arose to get the coffee-pot and pour her husband another cup of his favorite beverage. As she

did so the cover dropped off the coffee-pot and nestled cozily into the gravy bowl.

"Well, if it don't beat the oldest!" exclaimed Aunt Lydia as she replaced the dislocated portion of the coffee-pot and returned it to the hearth. "Everything is bound to bring somebody here this morning. I found two chair backs together this mornin' when I came into the kitchen; then I dropped the dish cloth on the floor; and that oldest buff cochin rooster has been up on the front stoop crowin' several times this mornin' and—why, there the old thing is again! I'll bet, I'll oust him away from there."

As she spoke she grabbed the broom and started for the front door, and waving the broom against the screen door, shouted, "Go away, you miserable thing. You're bound to bring somebody here this mornin' and we don't want anybody here. Go 'long off."

Just then Aunt Lydia heard a step on the porch, and looking out, she saw the minister of the local parish. He blushed considerably as he noticed the color rising in Aunt Lydia's countenance, but bowed very gracefully and made known his errand. He announced a

meeting of the trustees of the local parish and requested Uncle Reuben to be present, he being a member of the board of trustees, and then hurriedly but gracefully bowed himself away.

Aunt Lydia returned to the kitchen all wrought up with excitement over the embarrassment. Her husband, having finished a hearty breakfast, sat sidewise to the table with his legs crossed, his elbows upon the table, his head carelessly resting upon the palm of his hand, and his gaze fixed intently upon the sparkling coals on the hearth that had just been replenished with a dry stick of maple.

"Why, I was so 'shamed I didn't know what to do," exclaimed Aunt Lydia. "I'm so 'fraid he'll think I meant him. Dear, I do hope there won't anybody else come."

Mr. Haynes had gone into the woodshed and Aunt Lydia was talking very loudly so that he would hear, when there was another gentle shuffle upon the door step, and as she was hastily adjusting her apron and frowning fiercely the door was gently opened and in walked Harvey Morgan.

"I cannot help it, Aunt Lydia, 'I'm coming just the same," said Morgan alluding to what he had just overheard her say.

II.

SQUIRE BINKLE'S COURT.

REUBEN Haynes and his wife were never blessed with children of their own, and to them Harvey Morgan was as dear as an only son. He had lived with them all through his childhood and a portion of his youth, and they loved him as if he were their own boy. To him, also, Aunt Lydia was a mother. His own mother having died when he was an infant, he had lived with and known her as his mother through all of the years of his childhood.

It had been his custom to visit them often; but during the last few years he had been attending school at Ann Arbor and this was his first call since returning to the Industrial City where he was aiding his father in the mercantile business and strenuously endeavoring to build for himself a law practice.

Harvey Morgan was not the handsomest man in the commonwealth. It would be very pleasant to be able to say that he was, but he was not. As the world interprets beauty, his

face at first sight was not very pleasing to look upon. His large, uncomely nose, and heavy thick lips drawn tightly over complete rows of large, prominent teeth, having a protruding tendency, were not exactly consistent, perhaps, with the symmetry requisite for facial beauty. But whatever his countenance lacked in this line was made good by the extreme neatness of his appearance, the marked gentility and exactness in his manner, and the broad and generous smile that characterized his every greeting of those whom he met.

These virtues, together with his sharp, penetrating, intelligent eyes; heavy, black eyebrows; manly, square shaped chin, indicative of force; with the sympathetic smile overspreading his countenance; and over all, locks of jet black hair, neatly trimmed and carefully combed, never failed to attract the attention of a new acquaintance. As one looked into the deep brown eyes, the very ugliness of his face seemed transformed into a suggestion of beauty. He was not a very tall man, but broad shouldered, and well proportioned, muscular, of the nervous temperament, quick, active and ambitious, forceful in his character,

graceful in his carriage, pleasing in his demeanor, and deliberate and reserved in his speech.

It was a genuine visit that Uncle Reuben enjoyed with Harvey Morgan on that July morning. He felt that his work on the farm was in such a condition that he might sit down for a while, at least; and for an hour or more history, wit and anecdote flowed unceasingly. The conversation, in the main, was somewhat desultory—passing from events and circumstances of the past to probabilities of the present and prospects for the future, until at length they came to the discussion of local and personal matters, and Morgan inquired relative to many of the young people of the town.

"Uncle, is Andy Ferguson here, now?"

"Oh, yes. He came here as soon as he finished his course at Ann Arbor. His folks live here, you know. He hung out his sign the very next day after he got in town, and I guess he is doing pretty well. By the way, cards are out announcing his marriage with one of the Maier girls. You knew them, didn't you?"

"Is that so!" exclaimed Harvey half in interest and half in surprise, that it should

come so soon. "Yes, I knew both of them as school girls and am quite well acquainted with Arletta Maier as a young woman, having met her many times in Andy's company at Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti."

"Well, Andy and Arletta are to be married soon. I think, possibly ten days hence. I never dreamed Andy would make a lawyer. Everybody smiled when he began to study law. He was such at all, awkward and ungainly lookin' youngster, and always was the butt of a great deal of good natured fun and some abuse, simply because he was too generous hearted to resent it. I read somewhere that 'not every man can be a poet, no more'n a sheep can be a go-it,' and I have often said 'you can't get blood out of a turnip.' That's what I thought about Andy Ferguson, but them what's been hangin' 'round town says he's got the makin' of a lawyer in 'im all right enough, if he keeps a comin'. Did you hear about the case he carried through Justice Binkle's court for the Tannards last week?"

"No, Uncle Reuben, I haven't heard from any of my classmates since I got home from Ann Arbor, excepting a few who are located in the Industrial City."

"Well," continued Mr. Haynes, "it served 'em right, too. You know the Tannards, don't you? The old man has always been up to some dirty little trick. A number of years ago he traded a quit claim deed for some real estate in the village of Grantville to Ab. Lacey for a driving horse that Ab. had and was outtrotting everything in these whereabouts. Ab. was very backward about parting with his horse, but finally agreed, and exchanged the horse to Bill Tannard for the quit claim deed and an old watch in a silver case, with the silver 'most all worn off. The fellow was workin' for Squire Payne at the time and couldn't get away until after the season's work was finished up the next fall. Then he went down to see his real estate in Grantville, and found that the quit claim deed simply covered a public street in that town. Ab. didn't know what to think and simply made a great many threats at first, but finally took his medicine without squealin'. That was a horse on Ab. all right, and old Bill Tannard was a horse ahead.

"Then a year or two ago he got acquainted with a fellow down at Bradley, and in a deal he gave the fellow a chattel mortgage upon a lot of stuff that laid in a junk pile on his farm

over in Leighton township. So he has always been up to his tricks; and now his boy is a young man, and he's just as mean as his father is, and a little sharper 'n more educated; and you know the worst kind of a scalawag is an educated scalawag. You also knew Walter Borden, didn't you, Harvey? He lived in south of Green Lake three or four miles and was crippled in his right leg, and had a family of seven small children, and was as poor as Job's turkey. I swan, I was there one day with the doctor, and the kids were running around there like skippers in the cheese. They wasn't half dressed and didn't look as if they had had enough to eat in a month. They're very poor. Walter is an industrious fellow and does the best he can, but betwixt a large family and a crippled leg, he can't help but be pretty hard up in such times as we had the last two or three years. Well, Walter had a yoke of steers. He raised them himself on the farm, and broke them to the yoke. Young Tannard had some new land on his farm that he wanted to break up, and thought that yoke of steers would be just the thing to do it with. So he got after Walter Borden last fall to find what he could get the pair of steers for. It seems that they

came to terms and young Tannard paid Borden partly in money, and gave his own individual promissory note for twenty-five dollars,. due in sixty days, to pay the balance. Tannard took the oxen and Borden took the note. When the sixty days was up, and the note came due, James Tannard, the young man who gave the note, refused to pay it. Borden asked for the money several times; and finally, this summer, he demanded it, whereupon James notified him that he did not intend to pay the note. It was about this time that Andy Ferguson hung out his shingle. Borden finally got out a summons in Justice Binkle's court suing James Tannard for the amount of the note, and employed Squire Bates to look after his interests in the case. Tannard was not evidently very much afraid of the affair, but came down one day to employ Ferguson to look after his side of the case. Ferguson questioned his client until he had learnt the facts in the case, and then asked Tannard what his defense was. 'Why,' says Tannard, 'I was not of age yet when I gave that note and when I became of age a short time after, I refused to ratify the debt.' So after talkin' about the case for some time, Ferguson said, 'Well, Mr. Tannard, I can win

that case for you and know what I am talkin' about, but I'll take charge of your case only on one condition.'

" 'What condition is that?,' asked the young man.

" 'Simply this, that you give me a bill of sale of the steers for security for my services in the case.'

" 'Why, I see no need of that', replied Tannard, 'I will pay for your work.'

" 'Well, how do I know whether you will or not?'

" 'Why, I guess, if I say I'll pay you, I will.'

" 'Maybe so,' said Ferguson, 'may be not. You told Borden you would pay him, but now you are not going to do it. How do I know but you will serve me the same trick. I'll be glad to fight your case on that condition and will guarantee to win.'

"The young Tannard squirmed a good deal but he didn't know what else to do. Finally he executed a bill of sale of the steers to Andy for security for his fees in the case. and employed him to appear for him in defense of the suit.

"The day of the trial came on, and not being very busy that day, I thought I'd just

drop over town and watch the fun. Say, you ought to seen the crowd! Squire Binkle's court room was packed to the door. There wasn't standin' room. Everybody wanted to see Borden come out ahead, but you ought to have seen Andy. He never lost his head a minute. After the prosecution rested their case, he went on and proved out the fact that the note was made out before James Tannard was of legal age and then the argument that the youngster put up was a caution. I swan to gunners, if he didn't swing the hull crowd over on his side of the case, and of course, won out; and Justice Binkle refused to give Borden a judgment. The trial was over, and the crowds gathered here and there in little knots, talkin' it over when Tannard, happy as a lark and proud as a peacock, stepped up to Ferguson with his wallet in his hand and asked him how much he must pay him.

" 'Twenty-five dollars,' replied Ferguson.

" 'Twenty-five dollars!' exclaimed Tannard. 'Why, that's all the note was.'

" 'Yes, sir.'

" 'Well, I'll not pay any such sum,' said Tannard, nervously puttin' his wallet back

into his pocket and surveying the surrounding crowd with a triumphal air.

"'Very well,' replied Ferguson, 'I was afraid that's what you'd do, but I'll take charge of the oxen then, on the bill of sale. You may act your own pleasure in the matter.'

"Tannard turned white with rage, and then red, and so on until he had exhibited nearly all the shades of the rainbow; but he saw that Andy had him all right, and he and the old man got together, and Tannard paid over the twenty-five dollars, tore up the bill of sale, said something kind o' wicked about Hades or somethin', and sneaked out. Ferguson took the twenty-five dollars, stepped over where Walter Borden was settin', lookin' as solemn as a cemetery gate post, while his wife, settin' near by, had her face buried in her hands and was gently sobbin', and handin' him twenty-two dollars of the money, bid him welcome, sayin' 'You ought to lose the other three dollars for bein' such a darn fool as to trust the fellow.'

"You ought to have he'rd the shout that went up around there, and since that time I've heard nothing agin the efforts of Ferguson

in his ambition to be a lawyer, and I think we'll all live to hear from him again."

"That's just like Andy," replied Harvey Morgan.

III.

LOOKING BACKWARD.

A VERY pleasant forenoon quickly slipped away. Reuben Haynes took great interest in his house and his business, and at his mature age was still an enthusiastic farmer. He also took much interest in his nephew, and it was with great delight that he showed him the crops he had produced during the season that was passing. The spacious old barn was full, not only to the beams, but clear to the highest corner of the peak. There was hardly a crevice but that was packed to its utmost capacity, either with the golden grain or with the fresh smelling, newly harvested hay. Even the swallow holes in the gables were packed shut, and the swallows and their enemies, the sparrows, were compelled to seek an entrance through the open door below. Everything of interest was visited during the course of the forenoon from the dairy department to Aunt Lydia's latest bed of lettuce.

Had an observing eye been present, it would have noticed that there were occasional

moments when Morgan seemed to lose interest in the conversation. His eyes assumed a far-away look; an absent-minded expression covered his countenance, and the careless grunt took the place of the eager "yes" in assenting to his uncle's remarks. Uncle Reuben must have noticed it once, for he noticed a glance at the place where the swing used to be a few years before and began to make some remarks concerning it, when Morgan, fearing his uncle might measure the depths of his mind, quickly renewed the conversation about the old gentleman's favorite theme.

One of those old-fashioned, harvest-time dinners, such as only Aunt Lydia knew how to prepare, rounded out the forenoon in excellent manner; and after Uncle Reuben had nestled down on the kitchen sofa for an after-dinner nap, Harvey Morgan quietly strolled out the back way, and stopping a moment to pick a few luscious specimens from one of the cherry trees of a little later variety than the others, which hung full of beautiful red fruit, he proceeded on across the apple orchard, over the short stretch of meadow, and down to the pasture lot that extended back from the banks

of the river some twenty rods or more on each side.

A chirping chipmunk, with a hickory nut in one side of its mouth swelling its cheek to awkward proportions, scooted away and assumed a defiant attitude just beyond the roots of a nearby stump. Morgan watched the caperings of the little animal for some time. As he came through the back yard he had playfully picked up some little blocks of wood with which to scare the rooster, just as he used to do, when that proud creature curved his beautiful neck and commenced to crow. One of these he still held in his hand. Finally he tossed the block at the chipmunk and was amused to see the little animal dodge into a hole between the roots of the stump.

Morgan got down from his seat upon the fence and assumed watch over the chipmunk's quarters to see if the little fellow would re-appear. Thoughtlessly, he picked up the block again and began to carve it. The chipmunk might have come out a dozen times and run around. Morgan could not have sworn whether it did or not for he was looking backward. He was living his life over and reviewing the scenes

pictured again and again upon his acute memory in outlines too vivid ever to be erased.

He saw once more a bare-footed urchin of ten summers in brown duck overalls rolled up above his knees, with a little striped shirt made out of Uncle Reuben's old one, and an old broad rimmed felt hat, that had weathered so many storms that it was difficult to tell where the rim left off and the crown began. He saw this little boy gayly bedecked with peacock feathers, making the welkin ring with his gleeful voice and with the aid of a generous supply of goose quill squawkers and basswood whistles. He saw him stoning the robins from the cherry tree, driving the cows to pasture, and back again after they had finished feeding for the day, gathering eggs in the loft for Aunt Lydia, keeping the flies and mosquitoes away with the maple brush while Uncle Reuben was milking the cows, skipping pebbles over the pools, or wading and catching frogs and minnows in Rabbit river, scampering with the calves in the pasture, frisking with the lambs in the fallow, closely following Uncle Reuben in the furrow, anxiously waiting for him to plow up another bumble-bees' nest, and after supper riding old blind Flora down to Wayfield to see if there was any mail.

He saw, also, a little brown-eyed girl. She was a year younger than the boy, and much slighter, but they were boon companions. Though slighter than the boy, she was rosy-cheeked, healthy, strong, vigorous, and quick as a flash. Where the girl went, the boy would go. Where the boy went, the girl would go, even from the top of the tallest trees in the field to the deeper pools of the little stream known as Rabbit river.

He saw this little boy and girl together bringing home the cows. He saw them wandering through the grove gathering the first bouquet in the spring for Aunt Lydia and the little girl's mother. He saw them imbibing the cool draughts from the spring on the bank of the river and loitering under the cool shade of the maple trees in the meadow, while their little hands deftly arranged the pretty wreaths of maple leaves, and decorated them with the beautiful hepaticas, blue violets, and squirrel corn, with a careful blending of the beautiful white lilies from the hillside and the yellow cowslip from the edge of the river. He saw them once more jumping from the high beams in the barn, turning summersaults in mid-air, and safely alighting in the mow of newly har-

vested hay; he saw them again as they swung high in the old swing under the elm tree; as they crept through the grape-vines, gorging themselves with the luscious fruit; as they baited their hooks hastily to see who could catch the first fish; and as they finished out the day with a sweet, juicy melon from Uncle Reuben's garden.

He saw her a year or two older, when her father was just in time to rescue her from the deep waters of Rabbit river which had overflown its banks and become a river in fact as well as in name. He saw her as she lingered weeks and months with her life in the balance. He saw again the weary, sad faces of those to whom she was near and dear as they watched over her tenderly and carefully, waiting anxiously to see evidence of returning strength and health. He saw her pale and sad before she had fully recovered her strength, witnessing the burial of her mother. He saw her again as she bid the playmates of her childhood a long farewell when her father removed to Callwell. He saw her still later when she returned to live with her uncle to attend the Wayfield school. She was just blooming into young womanhood. She returned, however, just in time to

bid him another farewell, as he departed to the Industrial City to live with his father who had recently taken another wife and re-established his home, after having lived single since the death of Harvey Morgan's mother, which occured when Harvey was a little boy. He saw her again as she appeared to him on his occasional visits to Wayfield in the years following his return to his father's home—now a lady, reserved and modest in her manner, refined in her appearance, and beautiful beyond a question.

He lived again the days of his high school years in the Industrial City and saw again the scenes of university life. He wondered over the years that had slipped away, since he had lost all trace of the playmate of his childhood, and marveled at the fate that had brought them face to face on his graduation day.

Would that we had time to tell you all the scenes he in fancy saw! Had we the time to describe them all, perhaps the lack of sufficient space would forbid; for they varied with the seconds and were impressed upon his memory and imagination in all of the beautiful colors of the rainbow.

We must not think for a moment that Morgan had newly fallen in love. It was naught but the awakening of a love born long years before and now fervent with age. Morgan looked upon such matters in a very casual manner and permitted his mind to dwell upon them only as a temporary diversion.

Suddenly he heard the sound of the cowbell and it aroused him from his dream. He had been sitting there whittling at that block of wood for nearly an hour and the afternoon was passing away.

Leaving the chipmunk to his joys and his sorrows, Morgan strolled leisurely down the path he had travelled so many times in years long past, and again seated himself on the bank of Rabbit river at a point where years before he caught his first mink in one of Uncle Reuben's steel traps.

IV.

AN UNEXPECTED VISIT.

NEAR the place where Morgan sat the little stream broke over the crest of a gentle slope, and the clear sparkling water rippled musically over the stone and boulders in its rush to the lower level. Morgan had looked at those eddies many years before. They were practically the same now. There was the same little whirlpool just beyond that curved boulder near the middle of the stream, and the water spread in a thin film, as it struck the rock a little farther down the stream, just the same as it used to do when he was a little boy. "Surely," said Morgan to himself, "I have changed like Rip Van Winkle, but these scenes are just as they used to be. No wonder Tennyson thought and wrote,

> 'Men may come and men may go,
> But I go on forever.' "

The scenery of the miniature rapids and the musical sound of the rushing water proved too much for Morgan. Stretching out on the grassy bank with his arms braced to support

his head, he lay for many minutes with his gaze fixed upon the whirling eddy and his mind apparently occupied by thoughts not of the present. Finally his hand dropped down and his head rested upon the muscle of his arm for a pillow, and the heavy eyelids presently closing showed that he had forgotten his troubles and fallen asleep.

Morgan knew not how long he lay there wrapped in slumber, but presently a falling acorn struck him with full force just below the chin. "Well," he exclaimed, jumping up quickly and looking around for the cause of his alarm, "that's the first time I got it in the neck today. The squirrels must be beginning their harvest rather early this fall. I'd like to catch sight of the culprit that landed on my neck so effectively." He went about dodging here and there quietly as he could with his eyes fixed upon the tree tops, endeavoring to catch a glimpse of the squirrels through the leafy bowers above; but he could not get sight of them, nor see any evidence of their whereabouts. In his eagerness to do so his feet became entangled with the crooked trunk of a wild grape-vine, and he was thrown headlong, sprawling upon the ground in the most awkward manner.

This unceremonious proceeding was intended to provoke the young man and he was somewhat annoyed; but a second thought brought to his mind the extreme ludicrousness of his awakward appearance, and he burst out with laughter while yet sitting upon the ground. He stopped laughing, however, too soon for the spectators, for he observed that some other person was joining in the amusing scene. Looking back, he discovered, a few feet away, his playmate of many years before endeavoring to suppress a fit of convulsive laughter.

"Would you like to have me aid you to regain your equilibrium?" asked Miss Halliday as she came forward blushing in her timidity but smiling the accustomed smile that brought back pictures of the dimples and pearly teeth of the little bright-eyed girl she was fifteen years before.

Morgan was clear off his feet, both literally and figuratively. He was completely unnerved. Apparently a whole volume of thoughts passed through his mind almost simultaneously. He had been dreaming for some time and then to be awakened in such a startling manner and brought so awkwardly and abruptly into

"'Would you like to have me aid you to regain your equilibrium?' asked Miss Halliday."—*Page 34.*

the real presence of the heroine of his dreams was too much even for a man of his nerve.

He looked inquisitive, faltered some in his speech, blushed a great deal, and dryly replied, "I do not know whether it is safe or not to endeavor to stand up again. One is apt to lose confidence in his sanity after performing such exercises as I did that time. But," he continued with a thoughtful expression, "how did you happen to be here, Miss Halliday, and how long have you been here?"

As Morgan said this, his eyes stole a glance up into the tree tops, and Maude discovered the trend of his mind.

"Oh, I didn't throw that acorn that struck you and awakened you. In fact there are some squirrels hid away in the top of that tree and I have been watching them for the past four or five minutes. I have been over to Silas Wharton's to carry a message for Mr. Whipple. Coming back, I got over the fence at the cross-road and followed the cow-path in order to shorten the distance. In fact I didn't know there was anybody around until you jumped. Oh, you need not doubt me. Honest truth, I didn't—that's what we used to say when we were small. There were two large fox squirrels

and a black squirrel—first one I have seen since I was a little girl. There used to be lots of them in these woods in those days. But I did have to laugh to see you stumble around all wound up in that grape-vine."

Morgan was still looking for the squirrels.

"Oh, you can't see them now, Mr. Morgan. The first move you made frightened them about as badly as it did me, and they disappeared, but I couldn't disappear. I had to stand there and laugh up my sleeve until you burst out laughing. That capped the climax and I laughed in spite of everything. There's no use of your trying to see those squirrels, Mr. Morgan. The leaves are too numerous and you made too much noise, but they're up there, honestly."

Morgan proceeded to untangle his feet from the grape vine and resuming his seat on the bank of the stream, replied; "Well, I am very sorry that I made such a show of myself, but am very glad to have afforded you so much pleasure."

"Are you, really?" she thoughtlessly replied as she seated herself upon a large boulder that projected out of the ground a couple of

feet just at the water's edge. "Isn't the stream beautiful?"

"It is, indeed," replied Morgan, "I was thinking how little it had changed since I was a little boy and how changed I am."

"Yes, I wish I were back there to those days yet, don't you?"

"Well, I can hardly say I do, I have sometimes thought that way, but as a matter of fact, all there is to this life is what good we can do while we are here. One writer said, 'childhood is a mistake, youth is a blunder, and old age a regret.' I have never quite decided whether I fully agree with him, but really I cannot say that I care to live over my childhood. If I am ever to do any good in the world, I would like to commence."

"Well, Mr. Morgan, I think I agree with you; but I mean simply this, that in looking back at those times, there is a sort of longing; and after recalling the scenes of childhood and youth, there is a sort of sadness creeps over one, which, while not exactly oppressive, causes a feeling of extreme loneliness."

"Yes, that is true, and as we grow older that sensation becomes more and more dis-

tinct, and we experience it more and more frequently! All the old things seem to be the best. As I watch children play now-a-days, it doesn't seem as if they have nearly as good a time as we used to have when children. I have often heard Uncle Reuben say the young folk don't have nearly as good times now-adays as they used to have. The old-fashioned ways seem a great deal better than the new-fangled ways. Of course, I suppose it is all 'just seem so,' but I know the old songs seem the best, and I would like to stay over Sunday and go down to the old church at Wayfield if I thought they would sing the same old songs they used to sing in those days. But I suppose they have a choir now to do the singing while the audience listens. But in spite of all this, I think the world is getting better; and I'm glad I didn't live the last fifty years, for I would much rather live the fifty years to come."

Here followed a long desultory conversation. The two old friends had many scenes to call to mind in which they were the chief actors. Still, many years had slipped away since they were playmates and with the years had flown the familiarity that permitted them to address each other by their first names.

Morgan would have preferred to call his companion "Maude," but the circumstances seemed to demand that he should call her "Miss Halliday." Truly, Maude would have been pleased if he had so addressed her; but she, too, observed the rules of propriety as she understood them, and called him "Mr. Morgan." This formality did not detract, however, from the interest in the conversation, and it was a grand visit they enjoyed as they gazed into the rippling waters while the sun sank low in the west.

"Whew! shoo!" exclaimed Miss Halliday, "why, Mr. Morgan, I do not see how you went to sleep there. The mosquitoes are simply awful."

"Yes, they are now; but when I went to sleep the sun was higher and a little breeze was blowing."

"Oh, what have you, Mr. Morgan? Where did you get that pretty book?"

"I whittled it out of a block of wood that I picked up in the yard just as I came out after dinner. I sat on a log out there and whittled for an hour; and thinking over old times, when we were little folks, I hardly realized what I was making."

"May I have it, Mr. Morgan?"

"Of course, you may; but I guess you will find it a useless article."

"Well, it will serve as a reminder of your wrestle with the wild grape-vine at any rate," she replied with her usual smile. "But," she continued, "I must go. But say, Mr. Morgan, I wish you would not tell Aunt Lydia that you saw me, for she invited me and my cousin, Lena Whipple, over to spend the evening, and she wanted it to be a surprise for you."

"All right, Miss Halliday, I will act as if I were very much surprised to see you and no one need be any the wiser. But, see here, you have not told me anything about how you happened to be here, and really I think I have already experienced all the surprise that is necessary.

"Well, I will tell you that this evening, Mr. Morgan, for you see the sun is nearly down." With a wave of her hand and a glance at Morgan as he tipped his hat, she skipped off down the path with a step just as light and even more graceful than in the days about which they had been talking.

V.

AUNT LYDIA'S SURPRISE PARTY.

HARVEY Morgan watched the young lady until she had passed through the clearing and out upon the highway, and noticed that she did not turn to look back even once; and then, thoughtfully turning, he followed the cow path to the further side of the pasture and soon returned driving home the cows and trying to feel as joyous and free from care as he used to feel when a boy engaged in that pursuit. He knew it was near Aunt Lydia's supper time and that directly after supper was Uncle Reuben's milking time.

His explanation that he had spent the afternoon strolling and loitering in the woods satisfied Aunt Lydia's inquisitive nature; and after the evening's work had been completed, Maude Halliday and her cousin, Miss Whipple, came, and it is needless to say that Morgan was indeed surprised to see them, especially Miss Halliday whom he supposed (?) was at Cedar Creek.

A very pleasant evening followed. Uncle Reuben and Aunt Lydia had seen many years

of experience in passing through the varied scenes, stern realities, and vicissitudes of pioneer life; but they were not so old but that they were still able to enter into the spirit and enjoyment of the occasion; and Uncle Reuben's reminiscences, punctuated with Aunt Lydia's sarcastic corrections (for she was very particular about the details), together with the cultured and refined wit and humor of the younger people, served to make the moments pass so rapidly that it was far into the night before any member of the group had come to realize the fact.

"Uncle Reuben, did Mr. Morgan tell you about the bargain we students made for a reunion?" asked Miss Halliday.

"No, he did not," replied Mr. Haynes.

"Well, you see," she continued, "when we were coming home on commencement day, there were several of us together on the train out of Jackson. Mabel Ladmoor, Leota Filer, DeEtta Bailing, and myself, who composed the Filer Quartette, and Mr. Morgan, Mr. Sanderson, Mr. Hoskins, Rodney Boylan, Andy Ferguson and Arletta Maier, all happened to be together, and we had lots of fun. Mr. Sanderson proposed that we consider ourselves organ-

ized and that we should meet in reunion just ten years from that night. The proposition was agreed to unanimously and Miss Ladmoor was appointed secretary to call the meeting ten years from that night. Don't you think it will be an interesting meeting, to hear them tell the experiences of the first ten years after commencement?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Haynes. "If I am living, I'd like to be there, too."

"Uncle tells me," said Harvey, "that cards are out announcing the marriage of Andy Ferguson and Arletta Maier."

"Yes," replied Miss Whipple, "haven't you received an invitation to attend? I understood Arletta to say that they were going to invite a great many of his schoolmates who lived near enough to make it practicable for them to attend. Mamma said that it didn't seem possible they could have many guests in such a little house and with so few accommodations, but it seems that they are going in for quite a 'splurge.' "

"When is the wedding, Miss Whipple?" he asked.

"Just one week from tonight, and what do you think, Aunt Lydia? She has hired Amandy

Drake to make her wedding gown, and Mrs. Scott told mamma that her sister hired 'Mandy to make a gown for her once, but that 'Mandy didn't know any more about making gowns than a pig knows about Latin."

Miss Whipple laughed at the oddity of her illustration and waited to hear some one else express an opinion. She was not a bad girl, but she had not had the advantages of higher education. After finishing the course at the village high school, she had been free to exercise her mind by reading books of her own choice; and her people being fairly well to do and she the only daughter, she had not been taught the characteristics of a strenuous life, and had acquired in her leisure quite a habit of gossiping and understood thoroughly the gossiper's slang. But she was quick witted enough to know that it was best not to gossip unless those present joined in the remarks and appeared interested in the character of her news.

"Why, Amandy Drake made a dress for Dr. Hobart's wife and I think it was just simply lovely," returned Aunt Lydia.

"Is that so?" exclaimed Miss Whipple. "Well, they say lots of things that are not true. Father always said that Dame Rumor

and Madam Truth never got thoroughly acquainted."

"Yes that's so," said Uncle Reuben just after a vigorous yawn. "Now you're talkin'. At least if they did get acquainted they have had very frequent fall-outs. People are prone to talk about other people. That in itself is not so bad, but they make such poor choice in the matter of what they shall say in such talks. In other words, I mean to say that people are prone to criticise and talk evil. For instance, 'Mandy Drake is a hard workin', industrious and pert widow. When John Drake died a dozen years ago or more their boys were little fellows, and she had five children to support includin' the baby on her arm, and all she had in the world was the modest little cottage home John had succeeded by dint of hard work in payin' for, and she has been sewin' for a livin' ever since. It don't stand to reason that she don't know nothin' about sewin' and dress-makin' when she has been at it so long and people keep patronizin' her still. Yes, people are bound to say evil things whether they are true or not, and they don't stop at home to say them. Neither do they stop at the neighbors, but on the contrary take their thoughts with them

to meetin' and one might think from 'pearances, that they get more pleasure from them than they do from their religion. We have been havin' some very good prayer-meetin's lately. Sometimes we have them at the church and occasionally, to make a little change or to visit some neglected home, we have been gatherin' at private houses, and I must say we have had some very glorious manifestations of Divine Presence. Our former pastor was a very hard worked man. His talents in the pulpit had placed him in great demand and he was goin' here and there at calls from abroad to aid in preachin' the gospel and helpin' the good work along in less favored communities, and in this way he was frequently prevented from attendin' these prayer-meetin's. Our new pastor is not yet in such demand and has been able to be present every time. Last week, particularly, we had a glorious meetin'. All felt the Divine Presence. Deacon Bogart sat on a back seat and except for the peaceful expression on his face which you could read like a book, he demonstrated no unusual feelin'. Brother Gilbert sat on a front seat and kept his hands flying through the air zealously beatin' time to the music, and between every stanza he

found time to shout 'Praise God,' and he prayed nearly half an hour quotin' passage after passage of Scripture just as if the Lord hadn't read the Bible.

"By and by when they opened the conference meetin' and the brethren began, one by one, to tell their experiences, Deacon Bogart rose and said: 'I haven't the gift of talkin' like some folks has, but I can say that I am on the Lord's side. My heart is filled brimful, choked down, pressed tight and runnin' over with the love of Jesus Christ. Pray for me,' and he sat down. Then Brother Gilbert got up and the very first thing he said was, that we never had a preacher before that would come to prayer-meetin' and he said, 'I thank God that we've got a preacher now that's got religion', just as if our former pastor was not a religious man. Then he talked for twenty minutes to convince his hearers that he was a Christian, while I made up my mind that 'tween the two men, when I die I'd rather have Deacon Bogart to settle up my estate. They had a shoutin' time and made more noise than the Green Lake boys when they used to come over to Wayfield to old Ben Chandler's dances, and after meetin' we was just comin' out and Squire Binkle was standin' on the stoop,

and just takin' a chew o' tobacco and he, talkin' kind o' low, said: 'Brother Haynes, if you die and get to heaven, if you find them shoutin' folks there, you had better remember the advice of this Court to ye, and sleep on your pocket-books the first night.' The next day, after supper, I was comin' back from the Postoffice and I met Brother Gilbert. He asked me if I thought Deacon Bogart had religion and I said to him 'the difference between you and Deacon Bogart is, the Deacon has got religion all the time with a prayer on his lips and prayer in his heart, and you have to get religion anew every time you go to meetin.' Before I hardly got done talkin,' he asked me when I was goin' to have thrashers."

"Now, Rube, what's that got to do with 'Mandy' Drake?" asked Aunt Lydia.

"Well, I simply meant to 'lustrate the fact that the evil suggestions regarding Mrs. Drake are not true simply because we hear them. I think the fact we hear them is not even a sign that they are true."

Uncle Reuben dragged out his speech and indulged in a vigorous yawn as he looked at the clock on the mantel.

"Harvey did not look up as he was speaking."—*Page 49.*

"Well, Lena, we must be going," said Maude, noticing with surprise that it was after eleven o'clock.

"Yes, mamma told me we must not stay late," replied Lena.

"Well, Rube," said Aunt Lydia, "I promised the girls that you would go back with them as far as the beginnin' of the sidewalks. It is so awful dark now nights."

"Never mind, Uncle Reuben," said Harvey, "You're tired and I'll walk down that far with the girls."

Harvey did not look up as he was speaking and the girls were busy putting on their hats; but Aunt Lydia alone noticed her husband's significant wink as he assented to Harvey's proposition to go in his stead.

VI.

AN EVENING WALK.

IT was a beautiful evening, and not so dark as Mrs. Haynes had thought it was. To be sure the moon would not rise until near dawn, but the atmosphere was clear and the stars seemed brighter than usual; while the highway had dried off thoroughly during the day and it was, in fact, a pleasant time to walk.

"I am very sorry to put you to all this trouble, Mr. Morgan," said Maude. "I feel as if it were all unnecessary for Aunt Lydia to say anything. I'm sure Lena wouldn't be afraid and I know I wouldn't, but she is afraid herself and she thinks we are afraid also."

"I assure you it is no trouble for me, Miss Halliday. I know I shall feel the better for the walk and sleep the better for having taken the exercise."

"By the way," continued Miss Halliday, "Andy Ferguson and I met on the street this afternoon. He told me to be sure to tell you to call at the office before you go back to the

Industrial City. He wants to see you about an urgent matter. I came awfully near forgetting to tell you."

"I am afraid," replied Morgan, "that he will not be in the office so early in the morning, for I expect to take the eight o'clock train for the city."

"Oh, yes, you needn't worry," interposed Miss Whipple. "Andy will be there. He's always around and ready for a job in the morning whether he's got anything to do or not."

"Well, that is a pretty good mark in a lawyer," replied Morgan.

"Yes," continued Miss Whipple. "Mamma said that they were talking about it over at the Ladies' Aid Society yesterday, and they all agreed that if work and effort alone were sufficient to insure success, Andy would surely succeed; but they all said they doubted that he had brains enough to make a good lawyer."

"Well," replied Morgan, carelessly, "if Andy really lacked in that capacity, the Ladies' Aid Society that came to such unjustifiable conclusions would be the last place I could recommend him to go to get an additional supply. I will wager that Andy will take care of himself, and that without any help from the

Ladies' Aid Society or any one else. But I will call at the office in the morning and see if I can find him."

By this time they had reached the corporation limits of the village and the terminus of the sidewalks, and Miss Halliday told Mr. Morgan that she and her cousin could readily find the path for the balance of the way. "I thank you, Mr. Morgan," she said. "We can see the rest of the way and I know you are tired."

"No, I am not the least bit tired," replied Morgan, hesitatingly, "but of course, if it is your wish, I will bid you good-night. However, if you have no objection to offer, I will accompany you the rest of the way."

No objections were offered. So Morgan continued on the way in company with the young ladies, and the conversation that followed was particularly delightful. Their steps became shorter as they neared the Whipple home, and with a pleasant good-night the playmates of other years separated again.

Morgan called at Ferguson's office the next morning shortly before train time, but learned to his disappointment that the village attorney would not be in the office until a short time

before the noon hour, and he was forced to return to the Industrial City without seeing him. He left word, however, that he would call at the office in the evening of the following day, and hastened to the City to look after business affairs in which he had become interested in company with his father.

Two days of busy humdrum in the midst of one of the busiest little cities in the world sufficed to arrange his business affairs so that he could leave again for a few hours, and on the second day in the evening he again boarded a south bound train at the union depot and soon greeted his classmate, Andy Ferguson, in his law office at Wayfield.

"Well, how is the law business, Andy?"

"I'm starting out pretty well, Harvey. I'm sure I have no reason to complain when I consider the fact that I am a beginner and that I am starting in a small town. But to get right down to business, Morgan, I wanted you to call at the office so that I could tell you that I am to be married next Wednesday night, and I want you to act as best man in the ceremony, and to stand up with us while we are married. I simply wanted to notify you that your services are in need, and you need not

offer, nor attempt to offer, any excuses whatever, because I hope never to be married again. Hence, it is one of the most important events in my life, and I do not calculate to take NO for an answer. However, I would like to know if it will inconvenience you to accommodate me or not."

"I shall be glad to accept your invitation to be present, and I shall be glad to contribute whatever aid I may be capable of toward making it the most glorious as well as the most important event of your life. And before the wish gets old and stale to you, I want to tell you that I wish you much joy all through your married life. And," continued Morgan, "I predict that joy will attend you, for I believe, Andy, you're a winner."

"Thank you, Morgan. You fought my battles for me many a time when we were little fellows in school, and I never forgot it."

After a few hasty arrangements regarding the future, Harvey Morgan hurried to Reuben Haynes' with his baggage; and thence, excusing himself for the evening, he strolled over the same pathway he had trodden a short time before, and rapped gently at the door of Mr. Whipple's home.

Mr. Whipple was a very genial old fellow. He was a banker by occupation, but had retired from business some years before with plenty to provide a living in comfort for the remainder of his life, and he scarcely ever invested or concerned himself in business affairs. He met Harvey Morgan at the door and pleasantly invited him in. But Morgan inquired for Miss Halliday. To his great chagrin he found that she had gone in company with her cousin to their summer cottage at Gun Lake and would not return until the following Sunday morning. Morgan introduced himself to Mr. Whipple, and that gentleman, who knew him in former years when he was a boy, was evidently very much pleased to meet him again. Having known Morgan's father a great many years, and having been a friend of the Morgan family as long back as Morgan could remember, Mr. Whipple was very ardent in his welcome and insisted that Morgan should come in for a few moments at least.

The young man accepted the invitation apparently rather reluctantly, but they launched directly into a conversation that was entertaining to him as well as his elderly companion, and

before either took any note of the time it was late.

"I am very glad you called, Harvey, and I am sorry the girls were not here. They will be back in the morning of day after tomorrow, and I wish you would come and take dinner with us that day."

"Well, thank you Mr. Whipple, but I suppose Uncle Reuben's folks will expect me to stay there that day. I assure you it would be a pleasure, however, to dine with you, and if Uncle's folks are not too insistent, I will come."

Morgan repaired to his Uncle's home. As seemed strange to him, they raised no objections to his proposition to dine at the Whipple residence on the following Sunday. Possibly he would have understood the reason better had he seen the expression on Mr. Haynes' face as he gave his wife what he called the "knowin' look."

VII.

A SURPRISE NOT UNDERSTOOD.

MORGAN was delightfully entertained at the Whipple home. The old folks seemed no less delighted at his presence than the younger people. As for Maude, nothing too good could be said of her appearance and conduct. She appeared just the same little girl she had appeared to him many years before, only a little older. As for Lena, there fluttered in her mind a faint hope that Morgan had made his visit there because of interest in her, and she strove her utmost to be nice and pleasant and really over-did the matter to the extent that Morgan saw through her eagerness and comprehended her motive. This served to render her kindness to him an annoyance rather than a pleasure; but, gentleman as he was, no one knew of his feeling regarding the matter. During the course of the evening some young men and women of the village were present, and the comfortable parlor of the Whipple home was the scene of cultured gaiety. The windows were open and out upon the commons

rang their merry voices joined in the art that Morgan loved so much.

Morgan was not forward in social matters. He was, on the contrary, rather backward. But, however that may be, he was human and susceptible to all the emotions akin to the flesh and nature; so when the visit was over and Maude Halliday placed her hand in his as they bade good-night, he felt emotions that would have prompted other men to speak. Not so with him, however. He departed with a promise to see her again at the wedding, and with the coming of the morning resumed his work at his desk in the Industrial City.

The time for the wedding came and went. It was the principal event in two lives, perhaps, but the world went on just the same afterward as it had done before. It was a noteworthy occasion, and a smoother ceremony could not have been performed. The little parlor of the Maier home was decorated profusely with all the different kinds of flowers that the season of the year would permit, and the pretty arch, under which the happy pair was wedded, was decorated with all the taste of the most expert florist.

The groom, tall and slender and dressed in a long Prince Albert coat, was anything but beautiful. This was true when viewed from the point of fancy or symmetry; but when viewed from the point of manhood and true merit, he was still handsome, indeed, by force of his individuality and marked presence of intellectual capacity. The bride, though short and having a tendency to be heavy, was very fair to behold. Dressed in the finest white batiste made after the most lovely of patterns, her hair dressed in a comely manner, she was very tasty in her appearance. Even Mrs. Scott, who was present, remarked about the lovely fit of the gown that had been made by Amandy Drake. Morgan acted as best man and Maude Halliday acted as bridesmaid. The contracting parties were married. "That's the long and short of it," remarked a reporter who was present as he compared the bride with the groom.

Morgan very courteously offered his arm to Miss Halliday when it came time to depart, and the scene was over.

"I am very glad I was here just at this time so that I could attend Arletta's wedding," said Miss Halliday. "It just happened this way, too, for grandmother wanted me to wait until

after my fall term of school, but father thought I had better come now."

"How long are you going to stay in Wayfield?"

"About a week or so, yet. I wish I were going to teach near here so that I could make Wayfield my home. It seems more like home than any other place."

"I wish so, too," said Morgan.

"Why do you wish so, Mr. Morgan?"

"Oh, I thought simply that I might come to Wayfield once in a while, and we could talk over old times."

This was very mild, but it was as near as Morgan could get to the desired point. He was sentimental enough, but sentiment was to him a delicate subject to talk about. He made the remark very awkwardly and slightly blushed as Miss Halliday smiled, and she noticed his discomfiture and continued the conversation.

"I dread to live at Cedar Creek," she said.

"Why so?"

"Did you know Joseph Hoskins? Why yes, of course you did. He is so persistent in paying his attentions to me. He is a hand-

some man, but there is something that makes me dread to encourage his attentions until I am better acquainted with him. Is he a capable and worthy fellow, Mr. Morgan?"

It was unfair to ask him to answer such a question. It created a struggle in his mental being. Had he any right to pass judgment upon his rival? To have done so would have been to act the part of a coward. Had he any right to misrepresent the true character of Hoskins to one who above all others living had a right to place confidence in the words which he was about to utter? Verily, to have done so would have been still more the act of a coward. What then?

"I will answer your question after my own manner if you will agree to ask no explanation."

"Agreed."

"He is, and he is not," replied Morgan. Morgan had not met Hoskins more than two or three times, and had not formed an acquaintance with him at all. He knew him by reputation, however, and his flighty disposition could not find favor in one of Morgan's temperament.

"Well," replied Miss Halliday, "I'm sure such an answer as that would very naturally require some explanation; but, of course, I shall have to live up to my agreement."

By this time they were nearing the Whipple residence and Morgan managed to muster grit and presence of mind enough to ask permission to call at the house on the following Sunday. Permission was readily granted and Morgan took his departure.

The following morning found him back at his desk in the Industrial City wrapped up in the affairs of business. The three days that intervened between the wedding and the following Sunday quickly sped away.

The birds singing near his window awakened Harvey Morgan from his slumber on the following Sunday morning at the home of his uncle, Mr. Haynes, at Wayfield, and he arose to witness another beautiful day. All was gladness. The weather was ideal. Nature was conspiring to add effect to the outcome of the day. Morgan passed the early part of the day in leisure, strolling and reading. In the afternoon, bidding his aunt good-night, he strolled leisurely toward the village. He came to the Whipple residence and rang the bell. Lena

Whipple, with her choicest smile most conspicuous, greeted him at the door and invited him in. He inquired for Miss Halliday.

"She is not here, Mr. Morgan."

"Will she return shortly, Miss Whipple?"

"No, sir, she is out of town. Will you come in, Mr. Morgan? Papa and mamma and I are here."

"May I ask whether she returned to her home?" asked Morgan, feigning not to have noticed Miss Whipple's assertion.

"Yes, sir. She went home last night."

"Did she leave any message for me?" he questioned.

"Not that I know of, Mr. Morgan," she replied. Morgan noticed a little color rising to her countenance, and courteously excusing himself, he bade adieu and began to retrace his steps.

Now he was stirred up in general. Why this unceremonious slip! Was Lena Whipple truthful, or was he the victim of a joke! He could not believe his own playmate could have treated him in this manner. Surely there was unfairness somewhere; but if so, where was it and who was to be blamed? She might have

let him know, if she was unexpectedly called away. If she could not get word to him directly, she might have notified Uncle Reuben or Aunt Lydia. She certainly could have left word at the Whipple residence for him. He muttered to himself, "surely I am duped. She pretended to care nothing for Hoskins, but I can see through it all now. It was Greek to me then; it's an oil painting, now. Well, if she cares more for him than she does for me, why should I grieve? I had rather that she have her choice than to have my own, if her choice be such as to preclude me from having mine."

In this trend of mind Morgan strolled away out into the country and returned completely reconciled to his lot, to live and forgive but not forget.

No explanations were made to Uncle Reuben, but Aunt Lydia noticed that Morgan was not so sociable as common and that he looked worried as he hastened away to catch the early train the following morning to return to the Industrial City.

VIII.

A SCENE IN ANN ARBOR.

AT this time let us turn back to the scenes at Ann Arbor on Commencement day, the time at which our story really begins.

It was a bright June morning. The little thunder shower that had occurred early in the previous evening, was followed by a drizzling warm rain that continued nearly all through the whole night. As the bright new morning dawned, the beautiful maples that so plentifully adorn the streets of the old university town of Ann Arbor fluttered their freshened leaves in the soft south wind which so gracefully fanned the cheeks of the ripening cherries, all of which stealthily reminded one of the beauties of the good old summer time.

Every lawn seemed to look greener than it had ever looked before; every garden seemed to have donned a brighter and newer array of beauty; every rose-bud hastening to unfold its petals to the soft breezes, exposed its beauties to the admiring gaze of passers by.

The robin-redbreasts that frequent the trees on the old campus, which afford them favorable nesting places, were singing their morning songs with unusual gaiety. The sprightly fox squirrels that have made Ann Arbor famous, seemingly possessed of some new sensational or ethereal spirit, were frisking up and down the trees and through the tree tops in a remarkably playful manner, and it seemed as if all nature were striving with man to make this the one great day in the lives of those young men and women who were this day to receive their graduating degrees and step out into the world of action.

As the morning hours passed the great monarch of day raised his fiery orb slowly above the eastern horizon and began to render humanity decidedly uncomfortable by the intensity of his formidable rays. The old clock on Library Hall rang out the opening of the new day in varied tones that had long since ceased to chime. Its varying tones reached the ears of many an ambitious youth who had lived within their sound for months, and even years, until they had become so accustomed to hearing them that their melancholy strains seemed a part of the day itself.

On this particular day the chime bells of the old clock seemed to ring out with unusual force until they sounded in every nook and corner of the farthest limits of the city.

In one well furnished room on Church street, there were two young men. From an athletic point of view they were handsome fellows. One of them, Joseph Hoskins, was especially fine looking. With a form five feet ten inches in height; exhibiting broad, square shaped, muscular shoulders, and weighing about one hundred and eighty-five pounds, he moved about with a spry, elastic, and graceful carriage that attracted the admiration of all who met him, and moved to envy many who were less fortunate than he in physical development.

His room-mate and almost constant companion, Oscar Sanderson, was a somewhat larger man. He was a very little taller, with broader shoulders, and probably weighed nearly or quite two hundred pounds. In figure, he was well proportioned, square shouldered and erect. His eyes were of a very dark brown color, and his long black hair, which he invariably parted in the middle, gave a shape to his head that considerably increased the impressiveness of his appearance. But his heavy, overhanging

eyebrows and the unexplainable expression of his countenance gave to all his acquaintances an unfavorable opinion of him from the very first. Though he was like his companion in the character of his firm and forceful step, yet, unlike him, he was slow and deliberate. Hoskins would originate a project and accomplish it while Sanderson was still meditating upon his plans. On the other hand, Hoskins frequently made mistakes while Sanderson seldom failed to gain the desired end.

Hoskins was erratic, frivolous, quick tempered, and unscrupulous. He never had a definite aim. Even in school he had drifted about from one department to another doing fairly well in each of them, but making a change before getting more than a sprinkling of knowledge upon any one special line. In fits of madness he would readily exhaust the vocabulary of profanity, and would use but little discretion regarding the personality of the object of his invective. But he was optimistic, as a rule, and was as prompt in forgiving and forgetting as he was in getting angry. Being well to do in this world's goods, he was generous to a fault and was always ready to treat the crowd. As a result the members of his class

were wont to consider him a pretty agreeable sort of fellow.

On the contrary, Sanderson was very slow to anger; but, when he did succumb to his angry passions, woe to the object of his wrath for he never forgave and never forgot. He was graduating that day in the law department of the university and was of good standing in his classes. He was not very well to do in this world's goods and was rather miserly. He was never generous save in buying for the wants of his own body. But the most distinguishing features of Sanderson's character was his indomitable iron will. When earnestly interested in a project, either worthy or otherwise, he followed out his well laid plans with a dogged determination that seldom ever failed to insure ultimate success. Such was his character in this particular, that, had it been accompanied with strict, conscientious scruples, dictated by a noble standard of principles, he should have had a most enviable career.

The empty book shelves, littered floor, and trunks and parcels indicated that the inmates of the room were all ready to depart. The rugs on the floor were somewhat askew; the large earthen cuspidor was dirty, and sur-

rounded with a thin layer of cigar ashes and cigarette tobacco; and an old, dilapidated, much used pack of playing cards had fallen from the mantel and decorated the huge table at one side of the room. But the windows were open and the odor of fragrant flowers was blowing into the room upon the balmy southerly breezes: and the air was also scented by the ripened cherries, and the freshly sprayed lawns gave it moisture that made it especially refreshing and invigorating. The playful fox squirrel upon the front porch was coaxing for just one more generous meal of nuts, and the merry red-breast from the cherry tree was mingling her happy strains with the gleeful shouts of the boys and girls who were enjoying the first days of vacation time.

After returning from breakfast, having packed his trunk and valise, Joseph Hoskins sat a long time with his elbows on the table, his chin buried deep in the palms of his hands, and his eyes peering out through the screened window at some apparently motionless object in the distance. He was suddenly aroused from this reverie by the discordant sounds of the university clock as its old-time chimes announced the arrival of the student's working hours,

and he turned to find Sanderson reclining languidly upon the couch watching the ascending ringlets of smoke from a newly lighted Havana.

As if suddenly seized with a new consciousness of some neglected trust, he hastily withdrew his tobacco, proceeded to roll a cigarette, and was soon enjoying his favorite pastime.

"Say, Sandy, do you know what I have been thinking about?"

"Well, I should say not. The devil himself couldn't keep track of your thoughts, though I have no doubt they were devilish enough at that."

"No; not this time, Sandy. I was just thinking about this being the last of our school days and that probably most of our associates, if not you and I, will be separated and possibly never be together again."

"You mean to say, Joe, that you are feeling just a little bit sentimental."

"Well, sentimental, perhaps. You may call it that if you wish. I've been here four years, the last three of which you and I have been together, and I can't help but feel a little bit lonely to think that my school days are over," said Hoskins sharply.

"Well, Joe, you needn't get mad about it nor get excited. The fact is that's just what I was thinking about and I have thought about it a great many times in the last few days."

"It is an old saying that great minds run in the same channel," interrupted Hoskins.

'Yes," replied Sanderson, "sometimes. But there is more truth in the saying that no minds get further away from the same channel than great minds. I confess that there is something rather sad about leaving school. A fellow has about as pleasant associations in his school or college days as he can ever expect to have. We are young, ambitious, light hearted, of buoyant disposition, thoughtless of the past, proud of the present, hopeful for the future, and practically without care, and the best of all is the fact that our associates are all about alike in these regards. But tomorrow we are launching out away from this pleasant shore, out upon the world's great sea of action, from whence great sages have, from time to time, hurled back to us their warnings of the extreme significance of the time."

"They tell us that here our contests are friendly; our foes are but friends; and that our cares and troubles are all imaginary, while we

are about to step out upon the real battlefield of life where one's success depends upon another's failure; where ambition clashes and love is not; where strife, competition, and greed are boundless; and where merit is sidetracked for the predominating influences of favoritism, and opportunity itself is a veritable game of chance."

A long silence followed these apparently studied remarks. Hoskins, with a meditative look upon his face, lapsed into a sort of semiconsciousness. Sanderson, with his eyes fixed upon a landscape scene that hung upon the wall, was lazily pulling his eyebrows with one hand while the other was turning over and over the remaining portion of his cigar.

IX.

THE REUNION COMPACT.

HOSKINS was the first to renew the conversation. Assuming a look and tone of seriousness, he said: "Now, Sandy, I can't exactly agree with you. You say that we are all hopeful for the future. I'd like to know what hopes are in store for me. I have heard it said that every man has his talents but I would like to know what mine are. If I have any at all, I have so many faults that the talents are overwhelmed and I am unable to ascertain what they are. Now, you have only been here three years and are going out as a full fledged attorney at law, and as such, know just what you are going to try to do. But I have been here four years, have always had good lessons, and made good records in my classes, and do not know even what I am going to try to do."

"Well, Joe, if you had stuck to one purpose through the whole four years of your school life here, you would have graduated with honors in some department of the university today.

I would not have graduated today, if I had studied first in one department and then in another with no definite purpose."

"I know, Sandy, but how did I know four years ago what I wanted to be or do?"

"Well, do you know now?"

"I object to that question as leading, incompetent, immaterial, and irrelevant," said Hoskins in a jesting manner; though his manner seemed more forced than natural. "But," he continued, "I shall go home and help father in the store and post-office for a while and may be something will turn up. If not, I will get out and turn it up. The world owes me a living and I am going to have it. If I can't get it one way, I'll try another."

"Now, I disagree with you," said Sanderson. I contend that the world doesn't owe any one a living until he gets at it and earns it. In order to earn it he must accomplish something. When he has accomplished something he will have his reward of some kind. The world doesn't owe me anything. The debts are all on the other side. But I am going out to earn something. I am going up to father's farm in Blackstone county for a couple of

weeks to rest up, and then I am going down to the Industrial City, hang out my shingle, and if there's any money in the law business, I'm going to have my share."

"Well, Sandy, you're looking on the bright side of the proposition any way, and I hope you will surpass even your fondest dreams; but when you get away up to the front, I hope you will occasionally think of your old 'pal,' and the times we have had together and pray don't look down on me because I don't get on as well as you do. Just think of me! Here I am, twenty-four years old without anything at the present and without any prospects for the future."

"And worse than that, Joe. You have no purpose or aim; and in fact, don't KNOW what you want to be or do. You're a ship at sea with lots of sails, all spread, but without a rudder, driven hither and thither by the wind of impulses, and arriving at nowhere."

"Well, well, that's a beautiful illustration, Sandy, and you hit the nail right on the head, too. But I'll tell you one thing, I shall turn over a new leaf on this commencement day and shall practice a little different plan for the future."

Joseph Hoskins did not stop to recall how often he had made this same resolution on former occasions. A short silence intervened at this point, after which Hoskins assumed an argumentative mood and ventured to say:

"Sandy, don't you think a fellow can put a trifle too much determination and grit back of an aim? Or rather, don't you think that if a fellow sticks too close to his aim he is going to an extreme that is just as dangerous as it is to have no aim? There is such a thing as being bull-headed, and don't you think your own bull-headedness defeats your purpose?"

"Ah!—nonsense!" said Sanderson, "Make your aim the one purpose of your life. Let come what will, strive to reach your aim. Step aside for nothing. Fight!"

"And care not, I suppose, how it may affect others or their rights?" interrupted Hoskins.

"Certainly so," replied Sanderson. "This is a free country. Every man for himself. If you happen to step on somebody's toes they'll remove their feet."

"Sandy, what is your aim?"

"Now, you're asking questions which I cannot answer without taking you into my confidence; but this may be our last day together in this world, and as a friend of long standing, I'll tell you this much. I am going to make some money, get rich, succeed in my profession, and go to Congress."

"Whew! Sandy, that's a good deal, but I hope you will succeed. It is my aim to marry Maude Halliday. That's MY aim; and if I don't see you again after tonight, time will tell. But, Sandy, suppose we could look ahead ten years into the future, wouldn't it be kind o' interesting for us tonight to look ahead and know just all about the next ten years?"

"I presume that it would be very interesting, but I am glad we can not."

"Why?"

"Because, I have a great deal of faith in the old saying, 'there is more joy in anticipation than in realization;' and how dryly those years would drag away if we knew all about them before they came."

"Well, I guess you are right, Sandy. But at any rate, I shall keep watch of your

career; and if at any time I can be of service to you, never hesitate to call on me, old man, for anything within my power."

"I experience the same hearty, good feeling toward you, Joe, and say we enter into this compact, that we will meet on the anniversary of this date ten years from today and talk over the history of these ten years which you were wishing you could foresee."

"Agreed," shouted Hoskins, and as Sanderson arose they clasped their hands warmly together to seal the bargain, "but I'm here to tell you that when we have our reunion ten years from tonight Maude Halliday will be Mrs. Hoskins."

"Well," replied Sanderson, "Ten years—a whole decade—that's a long time to watch a wedding match, but I'll be on hand. Meanwhile we'll see how much is accomplished in the ten years."

Later in the day Sanderson and Hoskins visited a gypsy fortune-teller who had camped in the outskirts of the city and sought to learn their fate. After the usual recital had been made and the fees paid, the gypsy assumed a serious mood and said there was a great calamity

to befall them. She offered, to put them on their guard, to tell them for a very small sum what this calamity would be.

"Oh, go on!" said Hoskins, "I wouldn't give you a cent. You're a——fake."

"You're the biggest liar in seven states," said Sanderson.

The gypsy looked from one to the other, and in a fit of excitement and rage, waved her hands in a mysterious manner above her head, and called God to witness as she visited a curse upon the two and shouted; "In the presence of all these people, I serve notice upon you that we three shall meet again," and with a repulsive glance that caused them to shudder, she disappeared within her tent.

But the scenes of the day passed by and the students from the great University departed for their homes and were soon scattered like thistle blossoms to the four winds.

"We three shall meet again."—*Page 80*

X.

CALLED AWAY ON SPECIAL DUTY.

HARVEY Morgan found himself with plenty of work to do during the weeks and months that followed his visits to Wayfield.

His father had been in the mercantile business a great many years and had worked up an enormous trade. But the old gentleman was getting infirm and was unable to pay the attention to his business affairs that they really needed, and he was greatly in hope that his son would enter into the work with interest and share his responsibilities. This was asking a great deal of the younger Morgan who had spent several years and a great deal of money in preparing himself for his profession, which was of a very jealous kind, so far as time is concerned, and should have had his individual attention. The young man had great regard for his father, however, and with wonderful tact put his shoulder to the wheel and assumed much of the responsibility that had hitherto devolved upon the old gentleman.

As the weeks and months passed rapidly by, his work grew none the less. On the contrary, it seemed to grow more and more arduous; and as he got more involved in business, he began to brood over his neglect of the profession that he had chosen for his life's work.

He had thought at first that after he had put matters in good shape, perhaps the business could get along without his care, or at least without the application of his entire time. In that event he would apply his spare time to furthering his professional interests.

But in this idea he was greatly mistaken, and it required only the lapse of time to demonstrate this fact and bring him disappointment. Stimulated by ambition for the attainment of his desires, he threw all the energy and vim of his being into the business enterprise with an extreme effort to get matters in such a favorable condition as to grant him spare time. On the contrary, promptness in attention to business stimulated increase in the volume of business, and at the end of a year after Morgan's graduation he was completely tied up and was no nearer his coveted goal, from a professional point of view, than he was a year before.

But during this year the young man had made money, and had saved enough to afford him a pretty good bank account. He had discovered his lack of interest in social functions and he had successfully wrought a change in his ability to mingle with people representing all grades of labor and capital, and representing nearly all conditions in life. He had extended his acquaintance throughout the entire county, and had created friends in every class found in the populace of the Industrial City. He had taken great interest in political matters, in local affairs as well as in national affairs, not from an instinct of selfishness but as a question of principle, and was not infrequently called upon to expound his views from the political rostrums of the city. He explained for himself why he took interest in political matters in one of these addresses when he said, "The good people stand back and say 'politics are rotten; we don't want anything to do with it.' And by so doing they violate the most sacred duty that devolves upon an American citizen. If politics are bad, it is a duty every true American citizen owes to himself, to his country, and to his country's flag, to roll up his sleeves and go in with all the energies of his being to make them

better; and the man who is too busy with his private affairs to discharge his political duties and exercise his privilege of suffrage is not worthy of the protection of the flag which is emblematic of all that is noble and good."

Advancing in this manner in all other directions, how can we blame the young man for mourning over his hindrance from advancement in his profession? He was naturally dissatisfied and instinctively set himself about to contrive some plan whereby he would be relieved from his arduous duties in the mercantile business, and would not be compelled to exercise more than a supervisory care over the affairs of the firm.

The elder Morgan was steadfastly opposed to every suggestion that tended in such a course for a long time; but, ultimately realizing his gradually failing health, and hearkening unto the advice of his wife together with the pleadings of his son, he consented to the installing of a cashier and bookkeeper and a manager who were to be under the orders and supervision of the younger Morgan.

This opened a way to the young man whereby he might eventually get away from the mercantile business to a large degree; but

eighteen months had already slipped away since his graduation at the university of Michigan, and he was inevitably tied down until the new cashier and manager had become thoroughly acquainted with their work and the quality of service that was expected of them.

At length arrangements were completed and the new cashier and the new manager were declared ready for the responsibilities that were to devolve upon them. Then Harvey Morgan connected himself with the law firm of Packard & Hastings, one of the largest law firms in the city from the viewpoint of reputation and extent of practice, and went directly to work with a zeal and determination that defied failure.

This kind of an arrangement was rather up-hill business for a time while the manager was getting used to depending upon himself and dispensing with Morgan's needed counsel; but, as they became better able to get along without him at the old stand and he became more and more used to the work in the law office, the difficulty passed away. He made rapid strides in his profession, demonstrating his own marked legal ability to the gratification of his own ambition and the curiosity of others.

Time was quickly slipping away. Over two years had rolled by since the memorable commencement day at the university of Michigan. But those were days that counted. Several young men were laying the corner stone in the foundation of their professional and political careers. Each had been making history during the lapse of these two years. Oscar P. Sanderson had become connected with an old attorney and formed the firm of Dayton & Sanderson, for which he did much of the court practice, save the most difficult cases, and not infrequently were Morgan and himself matched in legal controversy. The result of these contests invariably showed unusual ability on the part of each of these young representatives of the bar.

The law firm of Packard & Hastings had developed an enormous practice, and it frequently became necessary to send a representative of the firm abroad to attend to matters in other cities and other jurisdictions. Sometimes this was done for the collection of evidence.

It was in the autumn following Morgan's connection with the firm of Packard & Hastings that the firm was retained by one of the large insurance companies doing business in the state in defense of an important case. The company

were sued to secure the payment of a certain life insurance policy carried by the plaintiff on the life of an old lady living near the north shore of Wall Lake in the vicinity of Cedar Creek. The old lady died under very questionable circumstances, having been burned to death at a time of day and in a peculiar manner that could not avoid exciting the suspicions of all cognizant of the affair. The insurance company had reasons to believe that there had been foul play on the part of the claimant, and refused to pay the amount of the policy until a thorough investigation had been instituted. In short, Morgan was sent post haste to interview several citizens who resided near where the fatal fire occurred and were supposed to know something about the affair.

With but few moments spent in preparation for the journey, he boarded the first train that left the union depot for the east. Being unable to make connection at Havens with the C. K. & S. to Delton, he secured passage with a mail carrier by the name of Larrabee who was carrying the mail from Havens to Cedar Creek, and rode as far as the latter place. From this town he passed to the west around the north shore of Wall Lake, and

spent a day among the farmers of this community endeavoring to collect some valuable information regarding the case above stated. Whether he was successful or not, is not known; but it is known that the ultimate disposal of the suit was a victory for the insurance company; that the claimant was arrested for murder; and that although acquitted, he experienced serious difficulty in preventing his conviction.

His work was finished, and it was in the afternoon of the day following his arrival in the vicinity. He stood on the north shore of Wall Lake, looked away across its smooth expanse at the cottages extending in every direction, and listened to the muffled sounds of many merry voices as they rolled across the placid surface. There was hardly a breath of air astir, and the only ripples to be seen on the lake were those caused by the finny tribe that inhabited its depths. On the shore the grass was rank and green; and as the sun from the southern sky shone upon it, it looked inviting to one who felt lonesome and sad.

Looking at his watch, Morgan observed that he had still plenty of time to spare to catch the train at Delton for Havens.

He dropped down upon the grassy bed at his feet, and supporting his head by his forearm while his elbow was resting upon the bank, his face assumed an expression of thoughtfulness; and one might have thought he was meditating upon the inspirations that were very naturally superinduced by the magnificence of his environments.

His work in that community had been completed and his mind was free to take its own natural trend. Hardly in the past two years had he allowed himself to recall so many of the scenes of his past life. Possibly it was because he recognized the fact that it was near this community that Maude Halliday had told him she and her people were going to live. But Aunt Lydia had told him that she had learned through the Whipple people that Maude's father had died, and he thought that probably she and her grandmother had removed before this time. However, now as he thought of it, he wondered that he had not thought to inquire regarding her and her people. "But what's the use," said he to himself, "She gave me the slip, pure and simple. I certainly ought to be satisfied without getting my foot into it again." Then excuses came to his mind where-

by she might be justified, but they were all overcome by the fact that he was "jilted and there's no other way out of it, and there's no use of thinking of it any more."

With a jump, a smile, and a whistle, he sprang from the ground, driving such thoughts from his mind, and glancing at his watch, strolled away to the west toward Delton.

XI.

AN EXCITING INCIDENT.

AS Morgan came around to the west shore of the lake, he found that the road was intersected by another highway leading down from the north, which formed of the land between the two roads a wedge-shaped triangle upon which grew a thicket of oak grubs. As he passed this shrubbery, there was suddenly brought into his full view one of the oddest little school-houses he had ever seen in his life.

He had read, and heard older people tell, about the old-fashioned log school-houses; but this was the first one he had been permitted to see, and it attracted his curiosity very much. It looked just as he had pictured in his mind the log school-house that Uncle Reuben and Aunt Lydia had told him about so many times, and it was scarcely half as large as the ordinary country school building of this day. But it was firmly and neatly built in a little corner nearly surrounded by a grove of small oak trees and grubs, and it looked particularly cozy

and comfortable after all. Especially pretty was it at this time of the year, when the early frosts had tinged the leafy background with a beautiful golden yellow which had supplied the needed contrast between the background and the brownish hue of the building itself.

Morgan, conscious that he had plenty of time and having no idea of intruding upon the presence of others, led on by his curiosity, crossed to the side of the building and was just going to look through the window when he heard a voice within exclaim:

"Oh, why do you come here? Do go away. Please go away! Will you go?"

"No; not until you promise me what I have been longing for, wishing for, working for, and fighting for, ever since I saw you first—promise me to be my wife!"

The first voice was that of a woman piteously imploring. The answering voice was that of a man, strong, resolute, and determined. Morgan's first impulse was to pass on; but noticing the imperative manner of speech of the man, and intuitively believing that the man inside was the intruder and not himself, he hesitated. He was no coward and would not for a moment

think of shrinking from the severest conflict in the protection of a helpless one.

As the voices continued Morgan searched around and succeeded in getting a position where the misplaced chinking between the logs had left a small hole and where one eye at a time could get a limited view of those inside.

The lady was standing with her back to his viewpoint, and being close thereto obscured greatly his view of the man.

"You know I love you," the male voice continued, "as never a man loved a woman before. I have always loved you. I will do anything for you if you will marry me. You know it well. I have told you many times. Why will you persist in your obstinacy?"

"I do not know you will do any such thing," replied the lady. "I know you do not love me. You are a brute. Had you the slightest regard for me, or for decency, you would not be here this minute. Had you the remotest element of manhood about you, you would leave this place before you take the time to utter another word ——"

"She's a fire-cracker!" said Morgan to himself, smiling. "That's what Uncle Reuben calls a woman's tongue. She certainly knows

how to use it. I admire her grit! I could fight for a woman that can talk like that under the circumstances. She's got the pluck right with her."

"You know, sir," continued the lady, "that if you have the slightest regard for me, you would refuse to do aught against me or aught that would injure my character or reputation. You know too, sir, that your persistence in coming to this place and refusing to leave after school hours are over, is a matter of common talk in this community that is both injuring my reputation as a woman and jeopardizing my success as a teacher in this school. You know too, sir, that I am a woman without the muscle and brawn of a man, and that I have a dear mother dependent upon me for sustenance and care; and still you persist in forcing your presence upon me. I have told you, time after time, that I could not and would not marry you, and you have repeatedly insulted me by ignoring my declaration and defying my will. Right there is the door—will you go?"

"Now just allow the door to remain shut! There's no need of your being wrought up in this manner. I'll not go until I have told what I came to tell you and obtained your answer

when you are able to see things as they are. 'Tis true I have asked you and pleaded with you to become my bride, and you have ignominiously turned me down, time after time. But I have something new to tell you in order to win your hand. Something I have a right to tell you, and I shall enforce my rights to the bitter end if you do not grant me the request I have asked of you. You say you do not love me. You have wrought up your temper and made an effort to be independent, but I know that you have sufficient love for me to satisfy my longings in that particular, and I shall do everything within my power that you may ask of me if you will but grant this request."

"What request do you refer to?"

"That you consent to be my wife.

"You mean to threaten me, do you? What do you expect to gain by such a demonstration of your extreme love?"

"I have reached that point where I have everything to gain and nothing to lose."

"Simply because you have already lost, and your loss is irretrievable."

"Is that so! Do you mean to say that you refuse me again? Will you not be my wife?"

"Never! Never! Go!"

"Look at this paper," said the man pulling a manuscript from his coat pocket. "It is a warranty deed executed by your father before he died, deeding the farm upon which you live to me. You must not ignore it. It has been on record for more than a year and I can shove you out of your home in a fortnight if I choose to. You can see for yourself your father's own hand-writing. I demand that you grant my request or I shall demand my legal rights. What now do you say?"

There was a moment of silence and Morgan thought he heard a little sob. He began to fear lest the lady would give in to the fellow's demands when louder than ever came the reply:

"What manner of love have you? How dare you, strong man that you are, come here to intimidate me, a woman? Would that I were a man? I would follow you to the ends of the earth to prosecute you for your villainy. That deed is a fraud and you procured it by foul means. Love!—Villainy!—a negative and a positive in one and the same body?—never! You are too low and contemptible to admit of expression. The ground is unclean whereupon you have trod! The atmosphere about you is

contaminated by your presence! There is no language so vile as to do justice—"

"Do you mean to refuse me still?" demanded the fellow imperatively and excitedly.

"Refuse? of course. How else can I do? My honor is worth more to me than my life. I would trust neither with you. Take the farm if you wish, ruin my reputation if you will, but take my honor—never! For there is a God! I command you to go!"

With an agile move she opened the door, but there was a rustle of clothes and a faint scream followed by apparent signs of conflict, and Morgan's nerve quickened, for the time for action had come. Springing to the door that still stood ajar, he took in the whole condition of affairs at a glance. The large athletic built man had pushed the lady back upon the tops of the desks and was just clutching his fists about her throat, when the heavy fist of one of his own kind in physical strength dealt him a blow beside the ear that sent him reeling backward and away from his victim. His hesitation was but for a moment, however, and then followed a combat that would have gratified the longings of the most enthusiastic prize-ring crank. Books flew, desks went over,

war reigned supreme. They grappled and fell, regained their feet and fell again, each striving with all his force and ingenuity to gain some advantage over the other. Fierce the conflict raged. Fierce were the blows that were landed repeatedly upon either of the contestants so carefully directed by his antagonist.

The conflict seemed to be a victory for neither man, as each failed to secure any effectual advantage over the other. At last they broke away. Stepping backward, the young man shouted, "Now —— you, I'll settle with you." As he did so he whipped a revolver from his pocket and raised it to the firing line. Morgan sprang to grapple with his antagonist again, but was too late too hinder him from discharging the gun. He was quick enough, however, to thwart the aim, and the bullet went glancing across the top of the old-fashioned high-topped desk used by the teacher, and imbedded itself in one of the oaken logs near the opposite door only an instant behind the teacher herself as she fled through the door in fright. With a movement quick as a flash the villain struck Morgan over the head with the weapon, a blow that seemed for the instant to daze him, and was just raising his revolver for a deliberate

"Fierce the conflict raged."—*Page 98.*

aim when he felt the cold muzzle of another revolver against his own temple and heard the cool but resolute command of "Hands up!" Hands went up without an instant of hesitation. Out from a cupboard-shaped closet right beside the villain stepped a little sharp-eyed stranger, and picked up the gun that had been dropped in compliance with his demand, and directing his remarks to Morgan he said, "It's lucky for you, young man, that I got that lock to work just as I did. I locked myself in there this morning without any trouble; but have been trying for the past hour to unlock the door, but it wouldn't unlock from the inside."

Morgan looked at the villain as he stood with his powerful frame erect and his arms stretched nearly to the ceiling, and he thought that he recognized in the fellow some one he had seen before. But he concluded that he must be mistaken, and began to look for the teacher. Bravely and heroically she had faced her assailant alone until her nerves were wrought to their highest tension; but when help came and the realization of her danger dawned upon her, she was overwhelmed with fear and fled with fright just in time to escape the deadly missile from the villain's gun. She

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could be seen in the distance eagerly watching the school-house apparently to gather some information as to the outcome of the conflict.

A little consultation followed between Morgan and the strange little man who disclosed the fact that he was a United States detective and was looking for evidence against the prisoner to substantiate more serious charges against him than those he could be charged with for this little fracas. The detective was halting between two courses. He was trying to decide whether to discharge the prisoner or place him under arrest; when with one bound that individual, leaving his warranty deed behind, passed through the door and the next instant plunged into the thicket followed in a menacing manner by two shots from the stranger's gun.

Morgan discovered that he had but a few moments to catch his train for Havens, and leaving matters in full charge of the detective hurried to Delton; and back at his desk in the Industrial City the next morning no one would have known by his appearance that anything had happened, save for the few extra bumps on his cranium and a somewhat ugly gash in his lips.

XII.

FAILURE OF MORGAN & CO.

MORGAN'S advancement in his professional career was fully as promising as his successes in political and financial lines. Coming into the office of Packard & Hastings acquainted only with the theory of the law and unskilled in its practice, he rose by dint of close application to his work, and at the end of six months' time he was practically in charge of all of the Justice Court practice of the firm. He was called upon to prepare many law briefs involving technical questions, aided in conducting Circuit Court cases, and was frequently sent abroad to attend to business of the firm in adjoining jurisdictions. His duties were not arduous; but on the contrary, as time went on and he became better and better acquainted with the rules of evidence and procedure, he grew more and more to like the profession he had chosen for a life's work.

But it cannot always be so. There inevitably comes a time when life does not flow

along like a song, and we are reminded of the words the poet sang:

"There was never a day so sunny,
But a little cloud appears;
There was never a life so happy,
But has had its time of tears."

And as we think of it, perhaps we are surprised at the amount of truth these words express.

It was but a short time after Morgan's trip to Delton that he sat at his desk one evening with his papers and books neatly laid aside preparatory to closing the office for the day. For the moment, he was gazing out upon the busy street, while his thoughts were eagerly gathering around scenes of his past life. He was of that character that, to him, it seemed as if there was a halo gathering around every scene. Everything that had come under his care or into his life, and had gone, lingered in his memory in a way to give him an expression of sadness. He became attached to his surroundings, and sorrowed at their rapid changes. He knew and loved every twig that grew upon Uncle Reuben's farm, from the little cherry sprouts in the orchard to the majestic elms at the edge of the clearing. In his mind he could recall every foot of the way from Aunt Lydia's

door to the postoffice at the little burg. He could see all the scenes that had been a part of his life on the farm, and he could go to the very spot where he and his playmates twenty years before, with their eyes filled with tears, had placed a little mark at the head of the mound where Uncle Reuben had just buried old dog Hector.

In other words, Morgan was somewhat sentimental in his tendencies and had many things among his keepsakes that he was keeping simply because he had had them a long time.

Gazing intently out into the busy street where many lights illumined the pathway of innumerable pedestrians he had not noticed that daylight had entirely given way to the darkness of night. Suddenly, he heard the newsboys shouting, "Evening Courier, five o'clock; all about the double suicide," and quickly closing the office, he passed out upon the street.

As he passed two men who were talking near the entrance of the Morris Department Store, he overheard one of them say something about Morgan & Company, and the other replied that it was all in the Evening Courier. Motioning to a newsboy on the corner, he procured a

copy of the paper, and stepping into the light from a nearby store, he began to glance through the news columns. About the first thing he saw was the large headlines on the front page, "Double Suicide! The Manager and Cashier of Morgan & Company Commit Suicide. Company Probably Will Go to the Wall," etc.

Morgan was dumfounded. Why had he not been notified? How had the paper secured news of this line before himself? He could not believe that the news statement was true. He had consulted the cashier that very day and nothing seemed to be unusual in his appearance. Only the evening before had he made arrangements with the manager for an increase of salary beginning with the first of the following month. He himself was the man that should have been notified first in such an emergency.

But in spite of all reasoning there were the statements in black and white, and Morgan manifested considerable excitement as he boarded a Lafayette and Stockton street car for the south end.

The news was all too true, and Morgan found to his own chagrin, as he recalled his

father's wish that he remain in charge of the business of the firm, that it was even worse than had been stated. Inspection of the books disclosed dishonesty on the part of the two parties in charge almost from the very day they were first placed at work. Thousands upon thousands of dollars had been diverted from the business channels of the firm to the private use of these two men. At first the discrepancies in the books were carefully covered up; but at length, when they had reached such enormous sums that it was impossible to cover them, they were boldly charged to the expense account of the firm or added to the purchase price of material or stock purchased. These large sums were withdrawn in desperation to speculate in the copper market, in the hope that a lucky strike might replace the sums already taken. In each instance, a large sum was added to the greatness of the amount stolen and to the loss of Morgan & Company.

Morgan had kept a close outlook over the affairs of the firm; but for several weeks past, he had been so completely tied up by the affairs of his profession that he had not been able to pay the required attention to the business affairs of Morgan & Company. The manager

and cashier, knowing this and working together, had improved the time by speculating, hoping to make a lucky strike to replace the stolen funds. Luck was with the other fellow, however, and they awoke to the realization of their condition when approximately forty thousand dollars of Morgan & Company's money had been spent in one way or another. The luckless fellows were doubtlessly overwhelmed by the predicament they were in, and the cashier sent a bullet crashing through his head with the cowardly purpose of shunning the consequence of his criminal operations. When the manager saw what was done, he locked the office doors, retired to his own room at the boarding house, and took the same route his brother in crime had taken to get away from the world and those he had wronged.

An effort had been made to keep the affair away from the knowledge of the senior Morgan, but to no avail. The younger Morgan was more seriously concerned for the life of his father than for all the financial losses. His attention was drawn completely from legal matters, and largely from business affairs, and directed to the care of the elder Morgan. In spite of all the care and attention afforded him,

the old gentleman, weakened by age and previously in a state of gradually failing health, steadily succumbed to the nervous strain brought upon him by the magnitude of his reverses and gradually failed in bodily strength.

Upon inquiry the young man found that the failure to notify him of this affair promptly was owing to the fact that the office telephone was undergoing a series of repairs, and the messenger sent out to notify him was misinformed that he was out of the city, whereupon the newspapers were communicated with promptly in the hope that he would see the paper.

An expert accountant was set at work upon the books of the firm, and an inventory was taken of stock and material on hand. These steps disclosed the fact that there were still funds and property enough remaining to pay a very large per cent. of the liabilities of the firm, and the amount of outstanding credits was sufficient to pay the balance and leave a sum of several thousand dollars. But the loss was irretrievable and overwhelming to the extent that rendered Morgan & Company unable to continue in business.

XIII.

A VISIT TO WAYFIELD.

NOW followed a long siege of sickness for the senior Morgan. Periods came when he appeared to be very much improved in health, and then a period followed, marked by extreme suffering. As time went on the periods of suffering grew in length and frequency, and each time left the patient in a weaker condition. Renewed attacks and a nervous affliction, which in turn added to the complication of troubles, and the old man gradually, but steadily, declined until he was beyond recovery and scarcely able to recognize those about him. In this condition he lived on and on for a long time, but finally passed away, and Harvey Morgan was indeed an orphan.

Mr. Morgan had lost his wife just shortly before his business reverses and this left no title or dowry claim against his estate, and Harvey Morgan was the only heir. Having been appointed administrator by the Probate Court, he settled up his father's estate. After

all the credits were gathered in and all the liabilities discharged, there was barely enough left to pay the administrator the customary allowance for his services. This was rather a remorseful conditions of affairs for Harvey Morgan; for he realized that if he had taken care of the business affairs of the firm of Morgan & Company, as his father had desired, he still might have been in a prosperous condition, even though it had been a sacrifice of at least a portion of his professional career.

Now three years had rolled away since the memorable commencement day; and meanwhile, Morgan was back at his old desk practicing law with the noted firm of lawyers, Packard & Hastings, depending entirely upon his law business for an income and free to push his profession to the exclusion of all other matters.

It was about the middle of the summer season that Morgan secured a few days to use at his own pleasure and make a visit to Wayfield. In the three years just past he had been unable to visit Mr. and Mrs. Haynes more than two or three times, and then in haste. Now business affairs were less strenuous; and the father, who had been very kind to his boy and always proud of him, as was also the step-

mother who had proven herself a very kind mother to him, was gone forever, and so the young man found time to think of his dear old Uncle Reuben and Aunt Lydia, who had in former years seemed more like parents to him than any one else.

This visit was a bright time in the lives of the two old people; for to them it seemed like the return of their own child, and they begged him not to get tied up in business again in such a way that he could not visit them frequently and regularly. Morgan promised to comply with the wishes of the old people; and ever after, so long as they lived, he visited them often and regularly, even when it was greatly to his disadvantage to do so.

Reuben Haynes was a practical old man. He was a close student of the Bible and adhered to its teachings very closely as he understood them. Speaking figuratively, he was not the kind of an enthusiast that is upon the mountain top today and in the valley tomorrow so far as religion is concerned; but was always the same jovial, cheerful, benevolent, kind hearted Christian; and his advice to his nephew was always impartial and blended with a good amount of good old-fashioned common sense.

It was one evening during this visit that they were sitting in the dining room after supper and exchanging views upon various topics.

"I see," said Uncle Reuben, "that you have allied yourself with the Republican party. How came you to do that? Your father was a Prohibitionist and you certainly did not follow my example, for I have not voted the Republican ticket since 1880 when I helped to elect Garfield and Arthur. So I conclude that you must have thought out a reason for yourself for doin' so."

"Yes, Uncle," replied Morgan, "I looked the field all over, and thought that there were more reasons why I should be a Republican than any other partisan, and I didn't stop to think who had been Republicans or who were Republicans."

"That's the Morgan of it. I would have wagered on that. But you are able to tell me the reasons, or at least some of them?"

"Yes, I think so, but it would take me an hour to go through all the reasons and explain them. Briefly, however, I will say I think the Republican party stands for a tariff schedule that is better suited to the prosperity and

development of our country and its interests. I believe in its great economic principles. It may not be so ten years from now, but today I admire the faculty of the Republican party to accomplish things. I sanction the aggressiveness of its leaders. I admire the diplomacy of its statesmen, and I believe that the question of free and unlimited coinage of silver at sixteen to one is about to become a great political question, and I believe in the Republican theory of a sound currency backed up by the intrinsic value of the gold it represents. There are many reasons that rise out of those already mentioned as well as other reasons, but you don't want me to go into the subject so far."

"Oh, no; but how about the temperance question?"

"Well, upon that point, as upon all others, we have to grasp the dilemma according to the conditions that exist. We have the liquor traffic to deal with and it is a potential factor. We cannot cram down the throats of an unwilling majority, under our system of government, what they don't want. We can have temperance laws only when we have a majority that want them. Hence, I desire to get as near to what is right along that line as I can, and I

think the Republican party represents the temperance element as strongly as any party existing; and if I am not mistaken, I think history will bear me out that her leaders have been largely instrumental in most of the important temperance measures that have been in force at different periods in our history."

"Oh, I think, perhaps you have well defined ideas for your position upon these great problems; but above all things, Harvey, concede to others a right to their own opinion, and always attribute to others honesty in their avowed convictions until you have proven them otherwise. A headstrong, offensive arguer is nearly always a detriment to the cause, just the same as an enthusiastic religious worker is who points the finger of terror and disgust at one who indulges in pleasures that to him do not seem right; when in fact a brotherly hand should draw near and beckon away from the evil, instead of the exhibition of a cold, rigid, abhorrence and long-faced disgust which, nine times out of ten, is the legitimate outgrowth of the inward conception of an idea that self is a good deal better than others. I am a Prohibitionist; and when our minister went up to Molton two or three years ago to lecture upon

the temperance question, I went along to get a little inspiration.

"The major part of the address was brilliant, up-lifting and beneficial, but in his enthusiasm he went too far with a portion of it. Warmin' up to his subject he shouted, 'if my boy was sick unto death and the doctor should say that whiskey would save his life and nothin' else would save him, and I knew it was so, I should forbid that he be given a single drop of the cursed stuff.' I felt just like jumpin' up and askin' him how he would justify himself in that event when he got before the great white throne, and was called upon to account for his doin's. When one deceives by maintainin' silence when he should speak out, they called it a silent lie; so when one permits another to die when he has the means to save him, and refuses to furnish it, he is guilty of murder.

"His extreme nonsense spoilt the effect of his lecture because every whiskey soaker in the community was deridin' his wild rashness. So I say it pays to be well balanced on all such things. 'Tribute to others at least a right to their own opinion, and nine times out of ten, you can drive a man better by makin' him think he is drivin' you than by any other way. And

in politics let people run over you like they would a dog, and then when you get a chance to fight for them get up and show them you've got the fight in ye, and you'll be one horse ahead on the game already."

Mr. Haynes and his nephew had conducted a long and desultory conversation; and as the clock announced the lateness of the hour, they sought their respective beds and silence reigned supreme.

XIV.

SANDERSON AND THE WHEAT DEAL.

WHEN O. P. Sanderson had finished his course of law in the University and returned to his home county, he met many of his own friends and friends of his family, who wished well for him but were doubtful regarding his fitness for the profession he had chosen.

This seems to be a condition which the young lawyer invariably meets. The reason for this is evident when we stop to think of the fact that a lawyer is supposed to be a guardian of justice and is presumed to be of superior knowledge in order to be able to render advice, and the masses are loath to acknowledge superiority in a man, especially a young man, until he has manifested his superiority beyond a doubt. Of course Sanderson had this condition to meet the same as every other lawyer who is not an exception to the general rule; but after spending two or three weeks in recreation upon his father's farm, which was about two hours drive from the Industrial City, he

hired rooms on the second floor of the Hartman building fronting on Van Buren street. Here with the same determined disposition that had characterized his whole life he exposed to view an attractive sign and soon began to forge to the front in the legal profession.

It is surprising to note what sheer force will sometimes accomplish when exerted in a worthy cause, but in this instance the force was backed up by a good intellect, a commanding personage, a well poised legal mind under usual circumstances, and an excellent and unusual readiness in the use of a somewhat extended vocabulary.

His chief besetting fault was his profanity. In court, where he did not and could not permit himself to indulge in profanity, he was always at his best in appearance and was soon marked by the people at large as an attorney with bright prospects ahead.

The young man saw this, too, and it was a source of confidence for him; but his eagerness was too great for the opportunities afforded him, and Sanderson began to look about him for short cuts to the coveted goal.

The acquaintance that was formed between him and Leona Filer at Ann Arbor had grown

into a warm friendship and ultimately resulted in marriage.

He did not remain long in the law business by himself. He formed a partnership with a very capable attorney named Dayton, who was well along in years, both in age and experience, and who enjoyed an enviable reputation as a member of the bar. The alliance was a fitting one and proved eminently successful. The senior member of the firm saw fit to bring the young man into nearly all the trial work of the firm. In the smaller cases, the trial was entrusted entirely to Sanderson; and only when the case was an aggravated one or involved technical questions of law or practice, did Dayton appear in person at the trial.

This method gave Sanderson an enviable opportunity to secure practice and experience, and he was not long in showing the mettle of a successful lawyer. His force made up for whatever he lacked in knowledge and his aptitude in the use of what he knew impressed the onlooker with an idea that he was very wise, while his modest, clear-cut expression and air of extreme confidence impressed the Court and jury with an absolute belief in the earnestness of his purpose.

Despite the fact that Sanderson was rather inclined to be saving, he found that he was unable to make financial ends meet in his early practice, and he inevitably got behind in financial matters. His wife had been accustomed to all the comforts of a life of great plenty, and her father had the means to supply them. He was a source toward which they were wont to look with great comfort even after their marriage. But it was only a short time after their marriage that a crash occurred in a large wholesale establishment which involved the father in great loss and left him with barely enough to provide a living for himself and family. Sanderson was doing fairly well in his law business, but not sufficiently well to defray his high expenses. He was engrossed in his business and professional affairs and carelessly neglected to keep proper vigilance upon the expense account. and at the end of about two years he found himself in debt nearly a thousand dollars. He readily concluded that he must look around to find some kind of investment whereby he could make a little means on the side now and then.

About this time, one day when he was brooding somewhat over his financial difficulties, he chanced to drop in at the office a little earlier

than usual. Elevating his feet to a comfortable position and enjoying his morning cigar, he eagerly perused a copy of the Chicago Record that he had purchased out of sympathy for a blind newsboy on the street. Rough as he was, he DID have a little sympathy for the unfortunate.

As he was glancing hurriedly down through the paper's newsy columns, his sight fell upon the stock market reports and the story of the great Chicago wheat exchange. There was much written about the Bulls and the Bears, and in the same column was included a tabulated schedule of prices, all of which seemed like Greek to him. But there was an article in another column, headed by explanatory sentences and printed in large type, which was quite interesting. It contained the astonishing statement that the greatest sensation of the month was the great Chicago wheat deal by which Joseph Leiter became the owner of upwards of nine million bushels of wheat, making him probably the greatest owner of actual wheat in the world. The paper included a statement that the young man, Joseph Leiter, was backed in his great wheat transactions by his father, Levi Z. Leiter, who was a former partner of Marshall

Field and Potter Palmer in their great business enterprises. This afforded both weight and credit to the story and in conclusion the article contained the allegation that Mr. Leiter had announced his plans, at the close of the deal, in this wise: "We can do no more than sit on our pyramid of wheat and wait until some one comes and buys it. I am confident that the price of wheat will go up, and that we shall sell our wheat at much higher prices than at present quoted for cash wheat in the market. We have bought wheat only as merchandise, not as a speculative commodity."

"Well! I declare!" he exclaimed, as he threw the paper upon the desk.

Assuming an attitude of thoughtfulness, and playfully emitting ring after ring of smoke, he watched them ascend to the transom above the door and disappear into the outer hallway. "If I could get the money, I'd make the venture. Nothing ventured nothing gained. But I wouldn't be surprised to learn that my account at the bank is already overdrawn."

A light step came down the outer hall and William Adams appeared at the door. Seeing that his friend was alone, he came in hurriedly and exclaimed,

"Say, Sandy, I've a scheme."

"What is it, Billy?"

"Why, you know," said Adams, looking around to assure himself that no one could hear him, "that Joe Leiter wheat deal is just tearin' things. Wheat has been hangin' around the dollar mark for a long time and I've an uncle in Chicago who says that wheat 'll reach a dollar and a half a bushel yet, and I believe the old fellow knows what he's talkin about, for he claims to be next to the whole deal."

"Well, Billy, what'll we do about it?"

"Say we buy some wheat. I'm goin' to, but I want some one to go in with me."

"But, Billy, I haven't got the money. I don't believe the bank will honor my check. How much will I need?"

"Well, I am going to buy 5,000 bushels. The broker requires us to put up two margins, so I shall have to put up one hundred dollars."

"Now," said Sanderson thoughtfully, I'll tell you what I'll do, Billy. I certainly can't have a very big balance at the bank, and I wouldn't be surprised to learn that I have already overdrawn my account. But I've done a good deal of banking already and they may

honor my check just the same. I'll write a check for a hundred, you take it down and cash it, and we'll go in. If they refuse to cash it, why, I am up against it, that's all, 'cause you can't get blood out of a turnip you know."

"Oh, the bank will cash it. I'll risk that. Write it up, quick!"

Adams took the check to the bank, received the money which was paid without hesitancy, and shortly returned to Sanderson's office. Then the two men went hastily over to the broker's office and purchased ten thousand bushels of wheat, paying two hundred in margins. Shortly before going into the broker's office, Adams urged that the whole be bought in Sanderson's name, alleging that his people were opposed to that kind of speculation and that he did not want them to know he had invested. Accordingly, the wheat was purchased in Sanderson's name at a dollar and one cent per bushel.

The two men returned immediately to Sanderson's office. As they were walking back and Adams began to think what he had done, he began to get very nervous. He had never speculated before and he lost his nerve when he realized the risk he was taking. He thought

how quickly he might lose the hundred dollars, as wheat had been fluctuating so rapidly for a few days back. He seemed to be overcome by the idea and straightway urged Sanderson to take his options.

"You know I haven't got the money to buy it, Billy. Where's your sand, anyway? You're a brave speculator!"

"Well, I ought to know better, but just think what a shape I'd be in if I lost. "Never mind if you haven't got the money, Sandy. Give me your note and I'll pull out."

Sanderson lighted a sample of "Shorty's" finest brand of cigars, and leaning back, carelessly watching the curling smoke, he remained silent for a full minute. His excited companion eagerly watched the expression of his countenance, knowing well that, when next he spoke, his answer would be final. An unexplainable fear had seized him. He seemed to feel that he was in a critical position. Sanderson tried to solve in his own mind the cause of Adams' anxiety and came to the conclusion that Adams had used some one else's money, hence the easy fright. He did not, however, ask any further questions, and drawing a note for one hundred dollars with his signature attached, he passed

"The answer came back, 'Market strong.'"—*Page 125.*

the note to Mr. Adams and it was understood and agreed that the options belonged entirely to Sanderson.

After the transaction was completed, Sanderson stepped to the telephone, and calling up the broker's office, inquired regarding the price of May wheat.

The answer came back—"Market strong and very active, and May wheat selling at a dollar and six."

Adams could not hear the message received; but he concluded, from Sanderson's order to hold for higher prices, that all was well, and he watched the speculator as he coolly resumed the seat at his desk and began to look over the morning's mail.

"Well, ain't you goin' to tell a fellow what's the news?"

"Sure, Billy, but I didn't suppose you cared anything about it now. You are out of it."

"Well, I'd like to know when I was the biggest fool—when I went in or when I went out."

"I don't know about that," replied Sanderson," but the last quotations place May wheat at a dollar and six."

"Well! well! If that ain't just my luck! What a — fool I was that I didn't call up before I sold out to you and find out the prospects, but I was afraid it had gone down. Gee! but say! there's a profit of five hundred plunks; Shake on that, Sandy. I am glad your luck won, if I DID make a fool of myself. You'd better close 'er out, though, and take your profits. That's my advice. Well, so long, Sandy. I'm goin' home and soak my head."

Sanderson received word at noon that May wheat was up to a dollar and fourteen cents per bushel, and with his usual determination he put in an order to be closed out when the price reached a dollar-twenty. There was no exercise of judgment in the matter, for he knew nothing of the market and its tendencies; but as a matter of sheer luck, the price of wheat was shoved up by the Leiter deal and frenzied dealers to a dollar and twenty-one cents per bushel, and Sanderson's stock was closed out, making a profit of nearly nineteen hundred dollars for him in one deal in one day, and as a first experience.

He followed this speculation during the next few days by further investments, and was very fortunate in clearing up over nine

hundred dollars more of good money besides what he lost. Then he waited for it to reach the top, calculating to sell short and reap again.

For the past decade the county of Blackstone had been carried in the general election almost invariably by the Republican party, but the elections in the city alone were much more uncertain. During this time a majority of the council and part of the time a majority of the county board of supervisors was Democratic.

Sanderson was a good mixer among the boys, was an excellent joker, enjoyed to an extreme his Havana smoker, never cared much about hanging around home in the evening, belonged to five or six secret orders for the purpose of getting help rather than to help any one else, could spin his jolly yarns for hours at a stretch without intermission, was an easy and pleasing off-hand speaker, and found pleasure in an occasional indulgence in the social glass, all of which combined to make of him an excellent politician,

He had already run on the Democratic ticket for several positions, including the office of prosecuting attorney for the county. But he had always been defeated, so he looked

around for a method of securing a position without going before the people for election.

Dame Rumor, though a little delicate about it, occasionally tells us of one fellow who had all of the above named characteristics of a politician, together with many others too numerous to mention. It is said that he held a position in the city hall many years before, having given bonds to an adequate amount, and had defaulted to the amount of many thousand dollars to the absolute financial ruin of at least one of his bondsmen. Whether this report is true or not has never yet been proven. It is true, however, that in many of the most beautiful cities of the world, in the midst of the greatest enlightenment where God has showered blessing after blessing, there are many people so depraved as to admire the pluck of men who do not even deny their criminal operations—men who ingeniously contrive either by bribery, fraud, or otherwise to avoid the legitimate consequences of their evil doings.

This latter politician was also a Democrat. Through him Sanderson saw his opportunity for advancement, and with him a coalition was formed whereby the fellow should be elected

mayor of the Industrial City and Sanderson should secure a certain position through his influence at the hands of the Common Council to recompense him for his efforts in the fellow's behalf.

This fellow was accordingly nominated for mayor on the Democratic ticket. The Republicans had carried the city many times and undoubtedly had a majority of the voters of the city as their sympathizers; but contention arose within their ranks over the nominations. While this was going on Sanderson and his crowd were at work day and night. They effected a complete organization of their ranks, and a systematic campaign was being waged with the help of every available force from the heart of the aspiring crowd to the cheapest ward politician.

Of course no money was used in this campaign! At least, it was contrary to the law to do so, and they said they did not use money. To be sure, they kept the truth on their side; politicians most always do, if there are any that do not, it is simply another reason why we should all be politicians. Suffice it to say that Sanderson exhibited the same dogged determination that had characterized his life, and having fallen into the

companionship of the ring, he countenanced and approved all that was done upon the theory that "the end justifies the means."

As far as he was concerned, the campaign was an expensive one. Nearly a thousand dollars of his own money had passed into political channels in the campaign, and the Democratic mayor was elected with a fair majority. Sanderson was appointed city attorney by the new mayor, and it took another thousand dollars to conduct the campaign to whip the council into line to confirm the appointment.

The proceeds from his lucky strike were exhausted and many hundred dollars besides, when he turned instinctively to the same source for relief that had helped him in time of need before.

In the first place he had made up his mind that wheat would not go above a dollar and a half a bushel, and he put in his order to sell short five thousand bushels at that price. The order was taken, the wheat sold, and several margins paid with instructions to "keep good;" but instead of a decline or even a halt, the price of wheat inclined steadily upward and he was forced to close out his investments at a great loss. Rumor whispered about two-dollar

wheat and financiers were still buying. So in the first week in May, he bought several thousand bushels at one dollar and eighty-five cents to hold for the two dollar mark. On May tenth the price reached one dollar and ninety-one cents, the highest point touched in twenty-one years; but Sanderson, with his characteristic determination, kept his wheat.

In a few days came the collapse of the Leiter deal and wheat was selling as low as eighty-two cents, and Sanderson was again the loser by two or three thousand dollars. His new position was bringing him a handsome salary; but he had overdrawn his account at the bank; he had borrowed from every available source; and new and arduous duties devolved upon him in his official capacity. In fact, he had reached that point where he was unable to meet his obligations. He paid a little here and a little there and tided matters over from time to time; and meanwhile, he attended quite successfully to the affairs of city attorney.

XV.

A COLD PROPOSITION.

THE Industrial City Savings Bank had one of the most elegant business places that could be found in the city. The magnificent stone building in which it was located towered ten stories high, and from its highest windows one could look out and down upon the tops of other massive structures, view in the distance the roofs of many dwellings, and follow the line of the tumbling waters of the river as it sped on its way down the rapids. The building was centrally located and it marked an ideal spot for the development of a thriving banking business.

It was one bitter cold day in early December. The work for the day had been completed. The clerks had all left except the cashier and the stenographer to whom he had just finished a long dictation, and she was busily engaged preparing a copy of the dictation upon the typewriter.

Joseph Hastings, the cashier, sat waiting for the result of his stenographer's labors and

peered out through the frosty windows at the hurrying passers-by, shuddering as the cold north wind hurled the drifting snow fiercely against the glass that seemed to quiver at the extreme test of the blustering elements. A smile of satisfaction played over his countenance as he sat in silence and appeared lost to his immediate environments; his flushed, healthy countenance bespoke the contentment that reigned supreme in the inner man; and an extreme air of politeness marked his mien as he accepted the completed manuscript from his assistant, bade her adieu for the day, and hastened to answer a call at the telephone.

"Yes, Sandy. I was about to go out for the day; but if you're coming right over, I'll wait for you."

Presently a light rap came at the door which was kept locked after banking hours, and Hastings hastily admitted O. P. Sanderson all covered with snow and nervously rubbing his ears, which were stinging with the cold although he had walked but a block or two from his office in the City Hall.

"Say, Joe," I've something I want to talk to you about; and I've got to hurry up to the house for dinner, and I wanted to know if you

couldn't come down to my office tonight. I'll be there from eight o'clock until about half past nine, and I want to have a talk with you about a little transaction that is worrying me, and possibly you can suggest a way out of the difficulty. Will you come?"

"Well, it's a pretty bad night, Sandy, and it makes a fellow feel as if he'd like to curl up before the fire in an easy chair, defying the cold and enjoying a leisure puff at his favorite brand of cigar; but if I can help you out, Sandy, I'll be down at half past eight."

"All right, Joe, I knew you would."

Hastings closed the door behind the lawyer, and curiously watching him as he hurried away through the blinding snow, he wondered what now was uppermost in the fellow's mind. Then turning, he prepared himself to weather the storm, and after making an examination to satisfy himself that the vaults were carefully secured for the night, he passed out and away to his own home.

Scarcely two hours later, securely closeted alone in the private office of the City Attorney in the City Hall, up two stories from the street below and away from all inquisitive eyes or

listening ears, the two souls so congenial to each other languidly reclined in the comfortable large upholstered chairs, enjoying the fumes of freshly lighted Havana smokers, pensively regarding one another and wondering what was to result from the occasion.

"Joe," said Sanderson, "I have a little scheme I want to talk over with you."

"All right. What is it, Sandy?"

"Well, first, I want to tell you some of my past experiences."

Here followed a long and careful description of his dealings on the market and his expenses in the political campaign that had landed him in the City Hall, and the consequent expenses attending his appointment to the position of City Attorney.

"And, now," he continued, "I have been occupying that position for over eighteen months at a salary of twenty-five hundred a year; but my living expenses have so greatly increased and social demands have become so burdensome to bear that it is practically impossible for me to get ahead a single cent. I started in as City Attorney with outstanding obligations to the amount of three thousand eight

hundred dollars. That sum has grown in spite of all my efforts to an aggregate amount of four thousand five hundred dollars. Some of this I owe at your bank, which you very well know. Matters have reached a point where I can't stand it any longer. Of course I'm City Attorney, and that gives me some prestige; but every time I go out upon the street to walk for a block or two, I am sure to meet some one whom I owe; and though they may be ever so kind in their manner toward me; I can read between the lines the most despicable 'dun.' I'm getting most everlasting tired of the whole —— business and something has got to be done. Besides, we are confronted with another campaign, and in order to hold my place I have got to go after it good and strong; and it takes money to campaign in the Industrial City.

Sanderson hesitated and nervously puffed at the mere stub of cigar that remained, while Hastings regarded him with extreme curiosity wondering what was coming next.

"Well, what about that scheme you said you had? You haven't disclosed that yet," said Hastings.

"No; well, there isn't much of a scheme about it. I just thought of a plan whereby

you might help me out and stand in a way to make a good thing out of it yourself. You see December wheat is just being delivered this month; and though wheat isn't selling up very well, it is about tax time in several States, just before holidays everywhere, and the time of the year when all of the wheat growers have to realize more or less from their summer crops. These things are shoving the visible supply of wheat, and the amount of market wheat, up by the hundreds of thousands of bushels every day. Now this will probably have a tendency to lower the price of wheat. However, if it does not it will indicate a healthy market that will, without doubt, be stimulated to a higher price as soon as this steady influx of wheat into the market begins to retard."

"Now, my scheme is, Joe, that you furnish the money and I'll go in and buy May wheat, and we'll share the profits alike. If you should happen to lose we'll share the loss equally, also."

"Oh, well, that would be a great note for me to endanger my position and run the risk of ruining myself just to help you out of the hole. I can't do that. You can find some other way to raise the money. I've been up

to such kind of work enough for one fellow. I've made up my mind to play square and keep straight with the world henceforth."

"Now, don't be hasty, Joe. We've been good friends too long to afford a rupture between us now, and I am sure you can afford it no better than I can. I helped you when we were in school, and you can't forget the little favors I bestowed upon you when you were in need of a friend. I loaned you the money to get out of this county when you were in danger a couple of years later, and signed your recommendation for a position of carrying the mail in the West. I came to your rescue when you were arrested there, and secured your attorney, paid him my own money, and aided him to secure your acquittal."

"I warned you against your rash act at the Palmer House when you turned on the gas in that detective's room, and I covered your tracks by getting the first report to the morning papers, and they came out with the story under the caption 'Another Case of Blowing Out the Gas.' I stood at your back and helped you into the position of trust you now occupy at the bank. All this I have done when I might have turned you over to the police at

any moment to take the consequences of your criminal operations. Now, in turn, do you mean to refuse to accommodate me by refusing to furnish me the money to drive a bargain in a legitimate deal?"

Hastings squirmed very perceptibly. He knew that Sanderson had a hold on him that could not be shaken. He knew, also, that he had no hold on Sanderson; and he was perfectly acquainted with the indomitable determination with which the fellow was endowed. Still he was defiant.

"You are decidedly unfair, Sandy. You are asking more of me than I ever asked of you. Your request, if granted, might ruin me. You never ran any risk for me. Besides you are not in serious trouble. You can easily raise the money to pay four thousand five hundred dollars when you command a salary of two thousand five hundred a year. and probably many hundreds more in rake-offs and receipts from your private business."

"Now just hold a bit, Joe. You say I am asking more of you than you ever asked of me? I am asking you to loan me a few paltry dollars for a few days, and I'll return them with profit.

You ask me to cover up the tracks of your criminal operations and by so doing I become an accessory to the crime and liable to imprisonment behind the walls at Jackson. My request, if granted, might make us both wealthy citizens. Your request has long been granted; and if the world at large knew it, we would both of us be in a prison cell tonight instead of holding an exalted position among our fellow-men. That's the risk I'm running for you, and you're running no risk for me. May wheat is sure to go up between now and the first of March and we shall realize a handsome profit, replace the funds furnished, and make a mortgage lifter for our own pockets."

"You don't mean to say that you'll go back on me entirely and turn me over to the police and produce evidence against me, do you, Sandy?—That's if I don't furnish the money?"

"Well, why not? There's no sentiment in this business, as far as I am concerned! Report you?—of course I will. H—ll! This is nothing but a cold business proposition with me. I've got to have the money. I'd a good deal rather that you go into the deal with me, though, and I think you will. But if you will not help me, I shall remain true to the people and turn you

over to the police. It's simply a question of yes or no. It's a case of don't want to, but I've got to, that's all."

A long and tedious silence followed these discussions while each man was turning over in his mind the preferable way out of the difficulty. Hastings was sympathetic and wanted to help his friend out of his embarrassment, but he was discreet also and knew the danger in Sanderson's plan. However, the more he thought of it, the more favorable it appeared to him.

"I'll tell you what I WILL do," said Hastings at length. I'll take care of the books and see how I can fix the cash account, and I'll try and help you out."

Hastings was decidedly nervous. He was not naturally a nervous man, and pilfering might not have unnerved him; but gambling with thousands was quite another proposition; and especially so, when the thousands belonged to another.

At length their plans were completed, the consultation was brought to a close, and each gathered his wraps about him and passed out into the storm.

XVI.

ANOTHER WHEAT DEAL.

THE next day after Sanderson and Hastings had the conference at the City Hall Sanderson bought options on five hundred thousand bushels of May wheat, and used in the purchase thereof ten thousand dollars that had been given to him by Hastings out of the bank.

Now came the strenuous days. Day after day the market opened and closed, and May wheat scarcely budged from their purchase price. Report followed report that wheat was surely going up. Others kept on buying, signifying the general opinion that it was a good time to buy. Time after time Sanderson left his business at the office and sat for hours in the easy Morris chair at the broker's office listening to the clicking of the telegraphic apparatus and watching the quotations as the new messages were received. Gentle fluctuations carried the price down to nearly a margin below their purchase price, and at one time he might have closed out with a profit of three-

eighths of a cent per bushel .But the same headstrong determination that prompted him to go into the venture manifested itself in his deliberate decision to hold for a rise of one cent per bushel.

And so for three long weeks the time dragged slowly on. The fluctuations of the market were indeed scant. May wheat never reached a point a half cent above their purchase price, and never in this time fell quite to a cent below that price. Meanwhile the cashier of the Industrial City Savings Bank was enduring the most intense agony. He had never before undertaken a thing of the kind that he could not cover up and elude detection. In this case, if the market went against him, he could not "keep good" by putting up additional margins; nor could he avoid the discovery of his dishonesty in the use of the bank's funds for any great length of time. He was positively wild with the suspense that hung over him like a cloud and diminished the activities of his intellectual faculties. The clerks in the bank noticed his peculiar behavior and spoke of it to each other, but were unable to explain.

Even one of the officers of the bank noticed it and ventured to ask Hastings if he was ill. By so doing he unintentionally and unknowingly

added to the discomfort of the unfortunate cashier.

Eventually, the holiday season was drawing near. Speculation was suspended to a considerable extent throughout the country. Many investors hastened to unload their wheat before the holiday vacation. Buyers were postponing their operations until after the holidays were over. The market became dull and inactive. Hastings occupied his place at the bank looking as serious and concerned as ever. Sanderson sat in his accustomed seat at the broker's office and watched the quotations as they were recorded. Suddenly May wheat made a slight drop and Sanderson looked worried. His face, like a barometer, indicated a disturbance in the elements of his make-up. Then wheat began to go up an eighth, an eighth split, etc. Gradually the price crawled up until it had reached their purchase price. Sanderson brightened up hopefully and smiled in satisfaction as he lighted a fresh cigar. Still it did not stop. Up, up, up the price went until it reached a quarter of a cent higher than it had been before, and Sanderson was happy. The muscles of his face had lost their rigid character and he was smiling. He was practically three thousand

dollars ahead of the board. He was actually turning in his mind the proposition to sell out; but he said, "What is the use of surrendering in the moment of victory? Wheat may be a cent higher in less than a day from now, and I must confess I need the money," and he decided to hold on.

He left the office, called Hastings over the telephone, and informed him of the bright condition of things. Hastings urged him to close out immediately and Sanderson promised to put in an order to sell at a profit of one cent per bushel. He then returned to the broker's office to resume his vigilance.

Suddenly the despatch came and May wheat was recorded with a drop of half a cent per bushel. Sanderson ceased to smile. His countenance assumed a rigid, immovable expression and he was wondering what to do. Time-and-tide and the wheat-pit, however, wait for no man to make up his mind. Before he had formed a full conception of his loss, wheat dropped another eighth, then a quarter, etc. Still it kept going down, until it was, inside of an hour, way below the point to which Sanderson had margined his options.

It was all off now. Sanderson, feigning a smile and cursing his luck, skulked out of the room. Going to the telephone again, he called Hastings and asked him to come to the City Attorney's office immediately. Hastings endeavored to ascertain whether the news was good or bad, but got no reply from Sanderson. Going to his desk and secretly slipping into his pocket something that he had thought he would want, he excused himself from the bank, a few moments, and hastened to the third floor of the City Hall.

Sanderson had preceded him at the office and beckoned him inside, fastening the door behind him. The moment the two met, the cashier really trembled with fear and excitement. His nerves had been strung up to their highest tension for three long weeks. They had hindered him from obtaining the requisite amount of rest; and though a strong, robust, athletic young man, he was weakened by the strain and his nervous, twitching countenance was piteous to behold as he inquisitively regarded Sanderson, waiting for him to speak and decide his fate.

Calm as usual, although his face showed unmistakable evidence of disappointment, Sand-

erson produced a newly opened box of fine cigars and extended them toward the cashier. Hastings reluctantly took one and lighted it.

"Sandy, you make me so ——— mad, I can't hardly hold myself. You take everything so ——— ——— cool! ——— ———! I want to know what's up? Is it live or die?"

"Live or die? What do you mean by that? It would take more than the loss of money to kill me. But I am sorry to say, Joe, that there is no use crying over spilt milk; and as far as the wheat deal is concerned, it's all off."

Sanderson spoke as cool and calm as if nothing at all unusual had happened, and did not even turn his head to note the effect of his words upon his listener. On the contrary, he was just emitting some beautiful rings of smoke and watching them ascend to the ceiling. On the other hand, Hastings, in his eagerness and anxiety, had not yet taken a chair and with an exclamation of wrath he suddenly threw open his overcoat, and whipping a revolver from his pocket, he flashed it in the attorney's face and a dull click sounded through the room.

Sanderson was not exactly a coward in every sense of the word; but he was not ready

to die, and had sense enough to know it; and the threatening attitude of the cashier frightened him to an extreme. Quicker than words can tell it, and indeed quicker than the imagination will permit us to picture it, he had sprung from his chair and the two mighty men were grappling antagonists.

The cashier, though the nimbler and quicker of the two, was some lighter than the lawyer; and being burdened with his overcoat, he did not offer to prolong the contest. Sanderson took the revolver away from him and compelled him to be seated. It developed that the revolver had been unloaded and cleaned by the porter at the bank and through some mistake had not been reloaded, which fact the cashier had not discovered. He was temporarily crazed and in his desperation he lacked both sense and judgment. Sanderson handled him rather roughly and exhibited a great deal of rage, which naturally might have been expected under the circumstances. But the Attorney was too cool and discreet to create a disturbance at that time and place, and when Hastings showed signs of weakening the contest was discontinued.

"'Sit down!' commanded Sanderson."—*Page 149.*

"What do you mean?" thundered Sanderson. Do you think it would let you out of your troubles to murder me?—You ———— ————fool.' If that gun had gone off, the jig would have been up with both of us ———."

"I intended it should!" said Hastings, rising. "I shall kill myself and I'll take you, too, if I can! YOU got me into this trouble. It's TIME you were dead!"

"Sit down!" commanded Sanderson defiantly, as he roughly pushed Hastings back into his chair. "What's the use of making such a fool of yourself? You're crazy! Come out of it! Use a little sense! There's nothing serious happened. Have I deserted you? Am I not standing right by you? You went into this wheat deal to help me out and now I'm going to stand right back of you. Don't be chicken-hearted, Joe. Good heavens, man, think of it! We'd both been dead by this time if that gun had been loaded."

Thus the conversation continued. Hastings calmed down. The glare and excited look of his eyes departed. He seemed to become himself again and appeared more natural than he had at any time for weeks. The deficit was

increased to $14,800; but they decided upon the plans they would follow, agreed to stick together through thick and thin without flinching if worse came to worse, and shook hands over promises of honest efforts for the future. Hastings was remorseful and penitent. Sanderson was confident and forgiving. The clerks in the bank noticed a brighter side in the cashier's make-up and time went on.

XVII.

DARK DAYS.

SEVERAL months had rolled away. The wintry blasts had given way to the balmy breezes of spring time. The cold white robe of snow that had covered the earth was replaced by a beautiful coat of green. The robins had come again and from every convenient tree top sounded their most welcome notes. A new life seemed to inspire activity in every living thing. On the farm everything had changed; and the hired man so near to nature's heart, whistled as he followed the plow and was happier than he knew. In the city the avenues of commerce and enterprise were thronged by a mass of seething, writhing competition. Everybody was out after the dollar.

In the city hall of the Industrial City the hustle and excitement of the day had subsided. All the clerks in the various departments had finished their work for the day and left the building, and everything was as quiet as a Puritan Sabbath morn.

In the City Attorney's office there was being carried on a melancholy conversation. The participants were two men much older in experience than they were in years. The attorney exhibited his characteristic composure, determination, and air of confidence that always made of him a source of courage and comfort for his weaker brother. The cashier looked worried to the extreme, but seemed to direct the most careful attention to the cheering words of the lawyer, and developed the most sincere faith in his plans and his ability to put them into successful execution.

"I am awful sorry, Sandy," said the cashier, "that I made such a fool of myself that time you called me up here to tell me about our loss on the market. I worried more over that than I did the wheat deal for a month or more, and I have been ashamed of it ever since, I was crazy, there's no use talking—I was crazy."

"Well, there's no use being ashamed of it," replied the lawyer. "No one is any the wiser for it than they might have been had you not attempted such a rash thing. It's no credit to you, however; for if your scheme had worked, everybody would now be wiser

than we. Lucky for you, Joe, that the revolver didn't make any noise. And that's saying nothing about my close call ——— ——! I could have killed you there for a minute; but thank God, I thought twice in the same instant. Crazy? Of course you were crazy. If I had not thought that you were temporarily insane and that your repentance was complete and sincere, I should not have indulged in associating with you since that time. I knew you were a little off on account of your worry over that deal, but I wasn't looking for the nerve that had stolen a thousand dollars in money from the mail and successfully faced a United States Court, and entered the room of a government detective while the officer was sleeping and turned on the gas, to succumb to the moderate pressure of risk that we were running in attempting to make a good deal on the market when nothing but money could be lost at the most."

"No, no. I had more than money to lose in this case. I was not a married man at those other times and could be in the Industrial City or Omaha one day and in Buffalo the next. But not so, now; I have a family that to leave would be worse than punishment, and nerve

wasn't in it with what I was up against with a $14,800 deficit staring me in the face."

"Well, that was a perfect shame, anyway. I confess if I had sold when you told me to, we might have cleaned up over three thousand dollars; but d——n it! I was sure I would win if I just kept my grit. I confess that I was largely to blame for that deficit, and I am going to stand right by you and pay it up."

"It's getting pretty suspicious over at the bank. The bottom may fall any day and let the cat out of the bag. I have had an understanding with my wife; and the minute I am sure the deficit is detected, I shall be missing around this neck of the woods. I case I go, I shall communicate with a cousin of mine at Havens, and he will deliver my message to my wife."

"Where do you think you would go?"

"Well, I haven't fully decided. but I should head for Baltimore first, and I wouldn't wonder if I'd go to South Africa. I believe there will be some nice openings there now. Of course the war is not over yet, but it will not last long and there will be a good place to get lost and begin over."

"That's a good business-like way to feel about it, Joe, but I don't think you need calculate on it very strong."

"Yes, but your opinion is not formed with a full realization of the exact condition of things. I tell you, we're getting pretty close pressed."

"Oh, pshaw! That's what you've said all the time. You were so scared that you were mentally off when the deficit was increased so last fall, and you have been having the bank authorities catching on to it ever since. Think of it! We've carried the deficit, $14,800, ever since last December and no one is any the wiser yet. But we have passed through the bank examination, too, and got along without discovery of the deficit. Joe, you did that pretty nice, and I don't think there's any use of borrowing trouble about it. We'll pay it up soon and no one will ever know there has been a shortage at all."

"Yes, Sandy, it's true we've passed along without discovery and it's true we passed through the bank examination; but I tell you they have been planning to count the cash at the bank soon. Through my advice it has been

postponed for a few days; but in the meantime, Sandy, we got to get down to business and raise this money or, I tell you, it is all off with both of us. I've managed to keep the shortage covered up for a long time and could manage, I think, to pass through another examination such as is generally conducted and might keep the shortage covered for a long time; but I can't do it any longer when they begin to count the cash and stick their noses in the cashier's business. We have got to wake up and do something because things have got to that point where I can't possibly carry the shortage any longer. Besides, it's growing right along, too, and amounts to $15,300 today."

"I guess you're right, Joe. Something has got to be done or we'll be up against it. But what in the d——l can we do? I have tried to borrow money from at least a dozen different fellows who I know have got the money all right, but I am unable to negotiate a loan on any terms. I got a clue though, that I can follow up and possibly I will succeed. I have a friend in Chicago who has lots of money. His name is Higgam and he is a relative of Judge Haywood. I have met Mr. Higgam several times and we are very good friends. He's got money

to burn, and I had a talk with Judge Haywood and told him that I was in need of money and wanted to borrow $25,000. I told him in substance the condition of affairs at the bank; but did not tell him which bank, and did not tell him who was interested besides myself. You know that I got mixed up in a little fracas with McDowd, the cashier over at the First National Bank and everybody thinks that the shortage is over there. McDowd, poor fellow, didn't know anything about this deal, but I don't make any explanation. I asked the Judge to go to Chicago with me and intercede for me with Mr. Higgam in an effort to secure a loan. My condition rather appealed to the old Judge's sympathetic nature, and he has promised me to go with me in a day or two. I shall do the best I can, Joe, and wouldn't be surprised if I should succeed. If I can't get $25,000, possibly I can get enough to cover the shortage; but I am carrying a pretty big debt just now on my private account; and if I could get $25,000, I could straighten up matters in general and have a chance to swing myself and get another start."

"Well," replied Hastings, "I hope you'll succeed, Sandy; but that's a pretty big amount

to borrow from one fellow in a private loan without the best security, and I've got my doubts about your getting the money. Meanwhile, keep your ears open for an explosion, for there will be one just as sure as the sun rises and sets many more times before this shortage is covered with the money. I'm not talking this to frighten you, Sandy. I mean just what I say. Neither am I exaggerating in the least; for I tell you, a shortage of fifteen thousand dollars is a pretty big sum to cover up in a bank the size of the Industrial City Savings Bank, and I've done extremely well to keep the thing in the dark up to the present time. And in the meantime, Sandy, I've made all arrangements to provide for myself when the explosion comes. I shall not go empty-handed. If there's got to be an exposure, there might just as well be a shortage of twenty-five thousand dollars as fifteen thousand."

"Now you're talking from the practical side of things, Joe. There's hopes when a man talks that way. It means simply this. You're going to do the best you can, fight like the d——l as long as you've a fighting chance, and then make the best of it when worse comes to worse. That sounds more like you used to talk. I'll

do the best I can, and we've GOT to do something; but whatever happens after we've done our best, I'll take the consequences. But it would be the end of me, too, if the thing got out. But, Joe, keep it covered up just as long as you can, for there'll be h—l to pay when the crash comes!"

There were several moments of silence. Sanderson was smoking his favorite cigar and smoked hard and fast. He was not making beautiful rings of smoke and watching them ascend above. He was too busy for that, and the smoke came out in volumes sufficient to make a hundred rings at every eager puff. His eyes seemed fixed upon one place. The expression on his face actually pictured a mood of anxiety. It was evident his mind was laboring strenuously with the problem that he had to solve.

Hastings regarded him with intense interest. He thought that if he had really wakened the lawyer to the condition of affairs, there was hope that something might be done. As for himself, he had no more problem. He had determined upon his plan and only awaited developments to carry it into execution. He was satisfied with his plan. He had only to

hope for the best, and he was gratified to see some one else doing some of the worrying.

The two men sat in silence for several minutes. It was not altogether unusual for them to do so, for they were together so much that they were company for each other even in silence. But the silence was unusual in the respect that it was prompted by serious and unpleasant meditation. The actual condition of affairs had dawned upon Sanderson in a new light. He had come to regard the shortage at the bank a menacing state of affairs, which indeed it was. If the facts should chance to be discovered, it would not only place him in an embarrassing position and deprive him of his remunerative station, but would further be likely to result in arrest and endanger his liberty. It was enough to make a man stop and think. It was high time that somebody began to think. Still more, it was time somebody began to act.

There was a long ring at the telephone. Sanderson answered the call. It was Judge Haywood. He called with reference to the proposed trip to Chicago. The Judge stated that he had unexpectedly been able to arrange to go to Chicago on the following day providing that

time was agreeable to the city attorney. Sanderson was in no mood to postpone the trip to another day; and the details of the journey were at once decided upon and understood between them.

The visit to Chicago was made as planned. Sanderson met Mr. Higgam, the man of great money. Every pressure at his command was brought to bear upon the Chicagoan to induce him to part with a portion of his money. The man of wealth treated his relative and friend in the most cordial manner, spared no means in his effort to entertain them, and made Sanderson feel very confident of success in his application for a loan.

Judge Haywood was very skillful in his negotiations, and he presented his mission in a very delicate manner; but at the close of the visit, Sanderson returned to the Industrial City somewhat wiser, perhaps, but poorer by fifteen or twenty dollars than when he left.

It was a great disappointment to him to be turned down in this manner, and it only served to sharpen his realization of the shape his affairs were taking. He was gloomy and silent during the whole time of the return trip. Judge Haywood endeavored to engage in con-

versation with him several times, but he received such a weak and disinterested response to his inquiries that he finally decided to give up the attempt.

At the union depot in the Industrial City the two men parted and Sanderson hastened to his office. There was a lot of mail upon his desk, including a couple of notices from banking institutions telling him that notes were due a few days later, and down among the papers was a short note from Hastings. It informed him that there was to be another bank examination in the week following and that a thorough inventory would be taken of all properties and funds belonging to the bank.

The great, strong, athletic figure quivered under the strain of mental anguish. Casting that paper down with a nervous fling and sighing in despair he walked back and forth across the room in silence. Never before in so short a time had a man changed so completely as he had changed in the last few days. From one strong, resolute, and confident, he had changed to one weak, forlorn, and discouraged.

It was late in the day and office hours were over. For a long time the fellow paced to and fro in his office until it was far into the night.

He was completely unsettled. He had even been unable to find comfort or relief from his customary smoke. His brow was drawn down until the wrinkles in his forehead became as noticeable as any of his facial features. Even O. P. Sanderson was worrying.

Suddenly he raised his two long arms up as if in fright and exclaimed, "For God's sake! What am I going to do?" Then sinking into the large office chair at his desk, he became as silent as a sphinx. In this thoughtful attitude he remained for a long time.

After a while there came a hurried knock at the door. He opened it and Joseph Hastings stepped in.

"What in the world is the matter with you, Sandy?"

"Matter? matter enough! All h—l's to pay! I didn't make the riffle in Chicago and everything is getting worse and worse ——"

"Oh, well, come out of it, Sandy. Here it is way after bed time. I was at home and in bed when your wife communicated with Judge Haywood and found that you had reached the city, and she has been worrying herself and everybody else for the past two hours because

you didn't come home. I felt sorry for the poor woman and have been running around to find you. Why didn't you answer the phone when it rang?"

"It didn't ring!"

"Why it certainly did ring!" Very strange if it didn't, for I've tried to call you every few minutes for the past hour and could get no response."

Here Hastings turned on the gas light and discovered that the receiver was down, in which case the bell could not ring. This was a mistake, perhaps, on the part of the clerk in the office.

"Now, look here, Sandy," continued the cashier. "You are just as big a fool as I was. Quit your d——n nonsense and go home to bed."

"I haven't tried to shoot any one yet," retorted Sanderson.

"Well if you keep up this strain for two weeks longer, I don't want you to come near me. No telling what you WILL do."

These words were like magic. Springing to his feet, the attorney brought down his huge fists upon the table with an emphasis to be remembered; and uttering an oath he declared

his faith in the cashier's logic. His face brightened up with hope, and Hastings heard him mutter something about "Try, try, again," and "where there's a will, there's a way," and he was himself again, just so soon. Then the cigars were in order again, and each lighting a fresh "blue top," they strolled away together and neither one of them ventured to speak of their troubles again that night.

XVIII.

A TIMELY SCARE.

ANOTHER week rolled by in the same old way. The world seemed as happy as a heart could wish. The sun came up in the east, traversed the heavens, and set in the west the same as it always had done. Out in the world the mighty tide of commercial evolution was rising and falling, and the strife and competition were the same that have characterized the age. Out upon the streets of the Industrial City its population was thronging to and fro. Each individual was proceeding in his accustomed manner in the pursuit of happiness. Each and every little faction was busy extolling its own virtues and decrying in loud words against the scheming, treacherous graft of the other. Each individual was looking out from his own narrow confines through or past the beam in his own eye at the inevitable mote in his brother's eye. Even the newspapers, supposed to be the molders of sentiment, whose freedom and liberty have been so carefully safe-

guarded, were joining in the despicable work of misrepresentation.

A great campaign was on in the political arena. Millionaire candidates for the highest executive office in the commonwealth were waging the battle fierce. It has been said that hundreds of thousands of dollars in this campaign were spent to gratify the selfish instincts of corrupt voters. The newspapers were filled with great exploitations of these candidates in proportion to the amount of cash put up for the publication by each individual candidate or some of his lieutenants, and innocent voters throughout the state read the articles and really thought they were gospel truth.

The fierce contest between the aspirants for political positions in the county was shaking the harmony of local affairs. As is sometimes said, "Everybody had a finger in the pie" or thought he had or wanted to have.

In the excitement all attention was drawn away from municipal affairs for the time being. Sanderson was on the wrong side of the political fence to attract any particular interest in the raging contests. Meanwhile he had been speculating again. Using a portion of his salary, he had invested on a small scale in some Metro-

politan securities and Pennsylvania Railroad stock, and succeeded in clearing up four or five hundred dollars. With this he had fixed up the notes that had lately come due at some of the local banks by making some small payments and renewing the notes, and he was apparently very happy to be relieved to that extent. He had approached nearly every friend of means he had in the city with an effort to borrow money to pay up the shortage, but in every case he had found nothing but disappointment awaiting him.

It was one afternoon, about this time, that he was waiting at his office for a caller. It was near the close of the working day, and the clerks in the various departments were preparing to leave their respective stations. Sanderson had been in suspense throughout the whole day. He had understood that the bank inspector was in the city in the morning and it was expected that he would visit the Industrial City Savings Bank that day. Had he been at the bank yet? What has happened, anyway? These were the thoughts that were uppermost in his mind as he stood at the window looking out upon the street at the corner of Van Buren

and Porter streets, apparently watching and waiting for somebody in particular.

Suddenly the door at his left was quietly opened and in stepped Joseph Hastings.

"Well, well, Joe, I thought you would never come. I have been waiting for you for the past hour. But how are things?"

"You've got me. I don't know any more about it than you do. Oh, they haven't found out anything yet, so far as I know. I've been mighty careful not to let them catch on. We've passed through the bank examination all right. But do you know I half believe somebody at the bank is on to our job?"

"Why?"

"Because. Do you know Frank Allen?"

"Yes."

"What's his business?"

"Reporter."

"Yes, he's the fellow! I saw him this noon over at Chapman's restuarant, and he asked me a lot of questions about the bank examination. The blamed rascal is on to our fix or I am greatly mistaken. I don't know how he would know anything about it unless some one in the bank has discovered it and put him next."

"Oh, pshaw! You're always surmising something while the main danger is in another place," replied Sanderson.

"Well, that's all right. But I wouldn't be surprised to see the next Evening Courier come out with a big scoop and expose the whole facts in connection with the shortage at the bank; and if it does, you'll see me flying my kite for parts unknown mighty quick."

"Oh, you're easy scared. I wouldn't believe that Frank Allen under oath. He's the biggest liar in seven States. He asked me a question once and I answered him in just five words. The next issue of the Evening Courier had half a column about the conversation and the most of it was given as a quotation from my language."

"So much more the reason to suspect him. If he was honest, he wouldn't write anything until he knew the facts. Being dishonest, he is apt to write anything; and although untrue, it would cause an investigation, and then we're up against it."

"Well," replied Sanderson, looking at his watch," if you're afraid of that, you'd better be laying low for it's about time for the paper to come out now. Yes, there's a newsboy now.

Listen! What does he say? Yes, sir, sure enough, 'All About the Big Bank Frauds'"

Hastings looked as wild as the imagination could picture. In his excitement he hustled about the office in the most awkward manner, grabbing his hat and gathering his papers, and already had his hand upon the door knob to pass out into the outer office when there came a vigorous knock at the door.

He dodged back and skulked behind some furniture at the further end of the room. Sanderson went to the door. Officer Porter of the police department was there. He asked whether or not Sanderson had seen Hastings recently. The lawyer promptly replied that he had not seen Hastings that afternoon and ventured to ask what was wanted of him. The officer made a hasty reply which Sanderson did not understand and hurried away.

Sanderson stepped to the outer office door, got the copy of the Evening Courier that had just been delivered, and returned to his private office. Here he expected to find the cashier, but he was nowhere to be found. Upon investigation it was found that the door leading into the hall toward the council chamber had been left unlocked, and through this Hastings

had probably passed out and on to—nobody knows where.

"God!" exclaimed Sanderson. "It looks kind o' serious, d—n if it don't! The next four corners for me to turn is to make up my mind how I'm going to save my own hide; because if the jig is up, I'm as sure as living to be caught, too. Meantime, guess I'd better look up and see what's in it, anyway.

So saying, Sanderson sat down and hunted in the paper "For All About the Big Bank Frauds." He found it. It was a short article printed on the front page of the paper. There was more space used by the headlines than there was by the article itself. It was a very likely sketch of some suspicions that had arisen regarding the dealings of some of the large banking institutions of the East.

"Much ado about nothing," remarked Sanderson audibly as he laid down the paper; and a little smile played over his countenance as he thought how unceremoniously Hastings had taken his flight. But his countenance clouded again, somewhat, as he recalled policeman Porter's visit and wondered what the fellow could want of Hastings.

But the lawyer brightened up as time went on and made up his mind that there had nothing serious happened. Soon a message came from Hastings' home, making the same inquiry that the policeman had made. Sanderson ventured to ask what was the matter, and was notified that the cashier's wife, while out driving, was thrown from the carriage by a frightened horse and quite badly injured. He also found that they had tried to find him at the bank, and had telephoned to the police department from whence the officer had been sent to seek his whereabouts.

This placed Sanderson's mind at rest. The only danger was that Hastings would flee so enthusiastically that he would not discover his mistake, and he would get so far away that he could not get back before banking hours in the morning. Knowing the fact and circumstances and being thoroughly acquainted with the man, Sanderson recognized in this the greatest danger.

He decided in view of these facts to remain at the office until the dinner hour, and he hoped that in the meantime he would hear something from the cashier.

XIX.

A NEW PROPOSITION.

SANDERSON had just relighted the cigar that he had been smoking when Hastings first came to the office, and was just settling himself down in his comfortable chair for a half hour with his paper when there came a vigorous ring at the telephone. He answered the call informing the party at the other end of the line that he would be in the office for some time yet, and in a few moments Thomas Baxter, a lawyer of considerable note in the city, stepped into the office.

Here, too, were two old friends. They had been attracted to each other by mutual political interests, had fought side by side for like political principles, and had been "birds of a feather" on numerous flighty occasions.

Baxter was, physically, a fine specimen of manhood. His appearance was pleasing, his intellect masterful, and his habits ideal. But his prejudice lay in the direction of the "almighty" dollar. He was not stingy. On the contrary, he was rather inclined to be liberal,

but he was not overly conscientious regarding the manner in which his money was obtained. Even at this very moment he had a scheme to work out.

Of course the doors were all shut. There was no danger of listening ears about. The cigars were passed and Baxter was puffing as eagerly as his indulgent companion.

"Sanderson," said he, "I've got something for you to keep under your hat." Then puffing vigorously at his cigar for a moment while he closely eyed the city attorney, he continued: "Would you like to make a few thousand and do it easy—just as easy as falling off a log?"

"You bet I would. I'd like to make it quick as that, too."

"Well, I remember of your speaking to me the other day about a loan," continued Baxter, "and I thought you would probably be in a way to jump at a chance to clean up four or five thousand dollars and do it easy."

"Indeed, I would," replied Sanderson.

"Well, in the first place it's a little dirty work, perhaps, when viewed from a public standpoint, but you've got to keep it under your hat. I say dirty work—I mean it's what

some folks would call dirty work, but I don't call it that. It's no more nor less than a legitimate business proposition as far as you or I are concerned."

"Well, what is it, Tom? I'm getting anxious to know how I can make such a noble stake with so little effort."

"Why, you see," resumed Baxter, "the city, as you know, is pretty well stirred up just now over the discussion of the problem of a pure water supply. It is merely a repetition of past history in the agitation of pure water in which the city has been engaged for the last twenty years. In the meanwhile these discussions and agitations continue, and the people of our fair city are drinking, and giving to their children to drink, a most foul supply of water, contaminated by the filth, slop and refuse from a large state institution that is located above the intake and is not provided with a filter."

"Now this question of a pure water supply has become a question of extreme importance. We have reached that point where something has got to be done. We might as well get into the band wagon first as last, and settle the question for all time. If we do not, it will only

come up again and again and again. The people are demanding that something be done to improve our water supply, the papers are advocating such a plan, and it is now the opportune time to strike while the irons are hot."

"But this is no small affair. It would be a gigantic undertaking to follow out any of the plans thus far suggested. In the first place, there is the Willow Springs project, which would involve an expenditure of about two and a half millions of dollars besides a filter plant, which would cost approximately seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars extra. Then there is the Lake Michigan plan which would cost about four and a half million dollars with a filter. There are several other plans, including the Tornado river plan at a cost of over three million dollars; the little Musk river plan, with a cost of nearly four million; and the so-called Blackstone county plan, at a cost of over four million dollars."

"Now, of these plans, the most feasible are the two I mentioned first, the Willow Springs plan and the Lake Michigan plan.

"You see these are pretty big deals. Whoever gets the job of constructing such an outfit or doing the engineering of either one of these

projects, is going to make money on a big scale; and contractors are going to stand around eager to get a chance at it because their contract would be a good one and they can safely get a good stake out of it."

"Now, my scheme is this. I have a client in the person of a fellow from New York by the name of Cramer who represents a firm of contractors that stands ready to put in a bid for the Lake Michigan plan. I can say more. They are so eager for a contract to supply the Industrial City with Lake Michigan water that they are ready to put up a stake to help the plan along; and I don't know what you think about it, but I think it's a good chance to make a few thousand dollars pretty easy."

"A fellow is apt to get his fingers pinched, though," replied Sanderson, interestedly.

"No, sir; not a bit of danger of it," replied Baxter. "The fact is, this matter of a pure water supply has been agitated by the thinking people of this city for such a long time that, however it may be secured, its establishment will be hailed with joy and welcome. And the fellow that takes hold of the matter will add laurels to his glory and thousands to his bank account."

"Yes, but it'll take money to get it through the council, and a fellow is apt to burn his fingers."

"Ah! ———! Burn your fingers! You're terribly afraid of burning your fingers; but I know how you got your election through the council and you did it for a paltry salary of $2,500 a year, too, and you didn't burn your fingers either."

"But how much would I get out of it, any way?" asked Sanderson.

"That is a question that will have to be determined later, but you can easily make four or five thousand dollars right off."

"Oh, well, I can't run any such risk to secure a contract for anybody involving millions of dollars and take such a big chance when there's only four or five thousand dollars coming my way. If that's all there is in it for me, I can't afford to tackle it. There ought to be a hundred thousand in it for me when you stop and think what it means. What's $100,000 compared with four or five million."

"Well, Sanderson, I'm in a hurry and must get home soon; so I have to go right away, but you had better think it over, and

we'll work it up a little, and maybe you can do better. I'll see you again in a day or two. Good night."

"Good night."

Sanderson was alone again. He was an inveterate smoker, and seemed to enjoy the habit about as much as it is possible for it to be enjoyed. He had just thrown away the remains of one cigar and relighted another, and was wrapped in its fumes, when he became conscious of the presence of another. Looking around, he saw Hastings sticking his head through the door which he had opened very carefully and quietly in order to reconnoitre before exposing himself. Finding the lawyer alone, the cashier's face lighted up with laughter in readiness for the jibes he knew were awaiting him for his reckless and unceremonious flight.

"Come in, wings," replied Sanderson. "You remind me of the boys I used to know in school. They were always telling about the sport they'd had painting the town, ringing door bells, and cutting up all sorts of pranks, and I went out with 'em one night for a little sport. You ought to have seen them when I went up to a house and rang the door bell. You could hear their feet patting the sidewalks

"'Come in, Wings.'"—*Page 180.*

for a block and a half without even stopping."

"But you didn't hear my feet, Sandy."

"No, but you got scared at nothing. How far did you go?"

"Oh, I went clear to the basement, out of the east door of the City Hall, up Quiet Avenue hill, and got down pretty well to the tracks of the Grand Trunk on Chauncey street when I bought a paper and hunted up what the newsboy meant by the 'Bank Frauds.' Then I telephoned home to know whether any one had inquired for me there, and learned that my wife had been injured by a runaway horse and they had sent the police in search of me. Then my fears left me. They said my wife is resting well, and more scared than hurt, so I thought I'd stop and see you before I went home. Now, what in the d——l are we going to do?"

"Well, I'll tell you, Joe, I think about you as you say about your wife. You're more scared than hurt, and if you just get a little more confidence and self-reliance about you, and keep a stiff upper lip, we're all right. Nobody knows anything about our shortage except you and I and Judge Haywood, and he don't know whether it is at your bank or some other. He thought it was the same matter that

was at the First National Bank. Get a little more grit about you; keep things under your hat, and don't let any one catch on at the bank. There's where your danger is, and nowhere else. All you've got to do is to keep things under cover at the bank."

"Is that all?" sarcastically replied Hastings.

"Oh, well, now, don't be so scared. Take a sober second thought. We're in for it, and we might just as well screw up our courage and hustle to get out of it. There's only one way, and that is to make good the shortage before it is discovered. Now, you do your best to keep it from being discovered for a while yet, and I'll do my best to raise the money."

"If it wasn't for my family, I would get out of here before they discover it. I'll tell you that."

"Yes; but ten chances to one you'd be caught before you reached a distance of five hundred miles, and then you'd squeal on me and we'd both be in for it in dead earnest. But, by the way, I've a proposition held up to me that may afford an opportunity to get money to pay the shortage, but it will probably take some time."

"Well, for God's sake, don't run off on some wild goose chase. Something has got to be done right off, now. What is the opportunity you refer to?"

Here Sanderson went into a minute description of the plan given by Baxter and asked his opinion in regard thereto. The matter was talked over in its minutest detail. No one phase of the subject escaped their careful consideration. After a lengthy conversation they seemed to arrive at satisfactory conclusions; and as the shades of evening were falling two men, a lawyer and a banker, wended their way up the street out of the tumult of the stormy business center of the Industrial City to the quiet and apparent rest of their own homes, chatting merrily and pleasantly and saluting those of their many friends who chanced to meet them upon the way.

XX.

A MAN FROM NEW YORK.

ANOTHER day followed in its turn. With the dawn of the morning, instead of the beautiful sunshine, there came a dismal, sultry rain. Not a breath of air was stirring and the trees drooped their verdant foliage beneath the load of sprinkling rainfall, while here and there a lone robin chirped in defiance of the storm.

But the streets were just as noisy as they might have been had there been not a cloud in sight. Ponderous, elegant coaches on the street railway swiftly glided to and fro; sturdy teamsters hurried their teams over the pavement of the main thoroughfares of the city; and the sidewalks were covered with an army of people scurrying here and there on business bent.

One among the hustling throng was O. P. Sanderson. He had passed through the night having obtained but little sleep. Though gifted with self-confidence and tenacious grit, he was conscious of his dangers and could not forbear to worry. He came down on a Paris

avenue car this morning on account of the rain; and hastening through the morning mail, made preparation to leave the office for a time in charge of the clerk and went over to the law office of Thomas Baxter. He found that gentleman at his desk, his face all radiant with smiles, contemplating upon the promising prospects for making a bunch of easy money. As Sanderson entered the office, Baxter arose and welcomed him with great fervor.

"I knew you would be over to see me," said Baxter, after the usual introductory conversation.

"What are you driving at? Do you mean to compliment me or are you joshing?"

"I didn't intend to do either," replied Baxter. "I simply desired to express my opinion that you had too good an eye for business to throw over a chance of this kind, because an opportunity of this kind doesn't come to a fellow every day."

He left his seat, and looking out into the outer office, carefully closed the doors and shut off all communication with the outside world. Then after the two friends had talked over some things in a matter-of-fact way as they

proceeded to indulge in their favorite smoke, Baxter continued:

"Now, look here, Sanderson. Possibly you haven't thought this matter all over yet. Now, I'll tell you what I think about it. There's a phase to this subject that I didn't bring up last night when we were talking because my time was limited, and I preferred to wait until I could go into the details with you. Now, you see, this fellow, Cramer, from New York represents a big moneyed concern or organization from the East that makes it its business to buy up advantageous franchises and contracts in municipalities all over the United States. There is always an immense graft in all such matters, you know, and they work them through by honesty or dishonesty, whichever seems to afford the greatest convenience. Of course the probability is, that in the most of such cases there is more or less bribery and dishonesty of various kinds before the deals are consummated, and probably many people lay themselves liable to prosecution. Now, I say, that is the kind of a concern it is that this fellow, Cramer, represents. They're nothing more nor less than boodlers and skin-flints from the ground up. They make that their business and are

quick to discover and take advantage of an opportunity. The fact of the matter is, the bottom of the whole concern is a fellow by the name of Wallers. He is a young fellow and a nice felllow, but he is easy. He fell heir to several millions of dollars. This Cramer and a fellow by the name of Barnum and another by the name of Kaylor got around Wallers on the theory that "a fool and his money are soon parted," and induced him to seek investment in municipal franchises. Cramer, who has a relative in Fredonia county, came out there on a visit. While there he got hold of a copy of the Industrial City Record and heard agitated elsewhere the question of a pure water supply for this city. A relative of mine in Fredonia county directed him to me; and after making a visit to New York, he has come down here to see if there is any possibility of a deal. It's ten chances to one that the purpose of the gang is to fleece Wallers out of a few hundred thousand of his dollars. But that is neither here nor there, as far as we are concerned. We'll take a hand on our own hook.

"Now, my proposition is this," he continued, as he cast another cautious glance at the door.

Leaning over nearer to Sanderson, he lowered his voice nearly to a whisper.

"You see, these fellows are as dishonest as they can be. They know we couldn't get such a scheme through the council saddling on to the city an expenditure of so many millions of dollars without resorting to bribery and corruption of the darkest hue. Accordingly, they will be willing to put up a good sum of money —probably a good many thousand dollars to begin operations with; and after we get hold of the money, we can stick it down in our pockets and tell the devils to go chase themselves."

This was putting the matter in a different light from that in which Sanderson had considered it. It appealed to him more particularly because there didn't seem to be any possibility of danger inasmuch as they would get the money and then refuse to do anything they could be prosecuted for, and the other fellows would not dare to begin any action to recover the money on account of the corrupt purpose for which it was furnished.

Thus Sanderson was convinced. He did not know that the future life of many an honored citizen was to be blighted by his decision, but he did feel that he could succeed in covering

the shortage at the bank and relieve himself from the worst crisis that he had ever experienced.

So it was understood that the city attorney would take hold of the proposition in earnest; and leaving Sanderson in the office, Baxter was out about ten minutes and returned accompanied by Mr. Cramer whom he made acquainted with the city attorney. He then left them together to talk over the proposition of securing a contract to supply the city with water.

Here followed a long introductory conversation. Sanderson pretended great ignorance of the scheme, and asked many questions involving the whole proposed transaction with the apparent purpose of enlightening himself; while, in fact, he was drawing out the characteristics and studying the ways of the man he was interviewing.

"Now, you see," said Mr. Cramer, "I haven't come out here on any little boy's play. I am here for a purpose and expect to do business. I'm here to get a contract to supply the people of the Industrial City with pure water, and I don't care anything about what it costs. I represent men who have plenty of money; who know a square deal when they see it, and

who are willing to whack up with the fellow that helps them to get on the inside. I am satisfied, Mr. Sanderson, that you are in a position to get the contract for me if you are a mind to take hold of it; and if you'll do it, you can set your own price anywhere within the bounds of reason."

"Well, sir, Mr. Cramer, I have talked your proposition over pretty thoroughly with Mr. Baxter, and I have come to the conclusion that it is a good one. I see no reason why we can't just push that deal through just as slick as a whistle."

"No; don't get that idea. You're making a mistake the first thing. The very first impression that you must form is that you are up against a stiff proposition; and that you will have to move slowly and cautiously, but fight like the d——l from the drop of the hat till the scheme is accomplished."

"I can't see it that way," replied Sanderson. "This water question has been hashed and rehashed over until every man in town knows the condition of our water supply, and there is a great demand for an awakening of municipal enterprise and the establishment of an adequate pure water supply. I don't believe it will

be a very difficult matter to convince the council that it is the only proper thing for them to do."

Just at this juncture Mr. Baxter returned to the room; but noticing who it was, Mr. Cramer continued: "Well, I'm sorry that you look upon it as such an easy thing to do, because I am afraid that you will be disappointed before you get very far. In the first place you'll find that the mayor will oppose the proposition from start to finish."

"I should sincerely hope so," replied Sanderson.

"Hope so! Why?"

"Simply because the council will do just exactly as the mayor doesn't want it to do. If I was to succeed in getting the Mayor on my side of the proposition, I should request that he and the newspaper that stands back of him oppose the proposition, and I guarantee, two chances to one, that in that case the other papers and the council would push just the way we want them to. Isn't that right, Tom?"

Mr. Baxter twisted his long mustache, scratched a little bald spot on his head that was surrounded by curly locks, puffed his cigar vigorously for a moment and then replied.

"I guess you're right. I hadn't thought of it in just that light, but I guess it's so."

"Well," said Cramer, "of course you fellows know the political conditions that exist here; I don't. You may be right. Perhaps you are. I hope so, at least. It is contrary to my purpose to discourage you; but on the contrary, I don't want you to get into a frame of mind that will make you too easily susceptible to discouragement. The easier it is to accomplish the project, the better it will suit me—that's a cinch."

"Well, if you care to listen, I can give you the reason why I know," replied Sanderson. "You see the mayor is a Democrat. I'm a Democrat. The mayor, at one time several years ago, held a municipal office in the city hall and was under pretty heavy bonds for the security of the city. As a matter of fact, he met with some unavoidable reverses, and was greatly in default when his term of office expired. There was probably in the neighborhood of fifteen thousand dollars that his bondsmen had to make good. The fellow retired to private life and resolved never again to meddle with political possibilities. The Republican party had everything its own way in city affairs, and the Democratic party began to look around

for some one who could carry the day and turn the tables on our Republican friends."

"This fellow was a cracker-jack when it comes to campaigning, and he knew the ins and outs of the city, and knew nearly everybody in the city, good, bad or indifferent. Consequently, many turned instinctively to him to be the Democratic candidate for mayor. Republican bosses commanded him directly and indirectly not to run for mayor; whereupon he accepted the challenge, secured the nomination, and won the election. Since that time the Republican organization of the city has been concentrating all its ingenuity and force, and directing its united strength against him; but in spite of them, he is still in the race. They find fault with him at every available opportunity, pick flaws in his procedure every day, and differ from him invariably. But in spite of them he is striving to redeem himself from the smirch upon his record, and is today the best mayor the city ever had."

"So I say, that whichever way the mayor may go on this proposition, we may rest assured that the bosses and papers on the other side will blindly grope in the dark in their effort to

discredit his purpose, and you need have no fear of their antagonism if he is against you."

And so the conversation continued. The general plan was talked over and all the minor details thoroughly discussed. Sanderson became, apparently, an enthusiastic supporter of the whole proposition. It was understood and agreed between them that he was to receive a payment down of twenty-five thousand dollars, and the payment of seventy-five thousand dollars contingent upon the obtaining of the contract. It was also understood and agreed that if the contract should be obtained and the system established, he should have six hundred thousand dollars of the stock of the company in his own right.

It was also arranged that Sanderson was not to communicate with Cramer, nor any of his lieutenants save through Baxter's agency or in private. Sanderson was to take care of the city end of the deal, and Baxter was to take care of the capitalist's end of the scheme. Cramer was to look after the New York people who were putting up the money, and to make the stipulated payments; Sanderson was to begin foul corruption of the conspirators in the

Industrial City; and Baxter was to act as the go-between and the means of communication.

The three men wore on their faces expressions of satisfaction as they each lighted a fresh cigar and bade good-morning, and Sanderson hastened to return to his duties in the office at the city hall. He had been so interested that he had not noticed how much time had been consumed in his conversation at Baxter's office. Nor did he realize that it was past the noon hour until he was accosted by Hastings who was on his way to lunch. He accordingly turned aside and accompanied the cashier to a restaurant on Main street, where they sought a table by themselves and talked over the whole water deal proposition.

The cashier stated that matters at the bank had quieted down and he felt that he could keep the shortage under cover for a while now, and the prospects of getting money from the New York parties gave the men new life; and as they ate and grew merry, the attorney ventured to laugh at the cashier's sudden flight of the night before.

Their mirth was interrupted, and their subject of conversation was soon changed because several friends and acquaintances came

in and took seats at the same table, cutting off their privacy.

The days that followed were filled with hope and anticipation for Sanderson; while the cashier, anxious and restless, kept a constant tab on the city attorney. Sanderson pointed out Cramer to the cashier several times, but never once did the attorney recognize the New York man on the street. He explained to Hastings that it was the understanding between them that they were not to recognize each other on the street or anywhere save Baxter's private office. This was merely a precautionary measure to allay the possibility of suspicion. Frequent meetings were held in Baxter's office, where questions relating to the deal were talked over and pointers interchanged. Sanderson was lying low and watching for a glimpse of that twenty-five thousand dollars. Cramer gave Sanderson to understand that the latter would have to show that the newspapers would support the deal, and other evidences of good faith on his part before the money would be forthcoming. The city attorney turned the whole matter over again in his mind, and thought of the dreadful shortage at the bank as he stroked his

worried brow, and then began to plan a campaign of action whereby he could get hold of the promised funds. And that is where the Industrial City water deal commenced.

XXI.

SANDERSON TELLS OF THE DEAL.

THE events of the days that followed the enlistment of Mr. Sanderson in the service of the eastern capitalists were many and frequent, and the city attorney of the Industrial City was busy enough to gratify the desires of a person of the most strenuous disposition.

"It's up to you," the cashier had said to him, "to do something to lift the shortage, now that an opportunity is afforded." And with a significant clinch of his fist he brought it down with a whack upon the table before him, in emphasis of the words that "it must be done d——n quick, too."

"To a man up a tree," this would have appeared to be the exact interpretation of the condition of affairs, and Sanderson was in position to see and understand as well as the "man up a tree." He had tried to borrow money at every conceivable source. He had studied to contrive some source whereby he could obtain the requisite funds to pay up the

deficit, until he had exhausted every available idea that afforded any degree of promise of success. Nothing remained for him to do but to get into the harness and hustle to satisfy the eastern capitalists that he was in earnest by showing the fruits of his efforts. Not until he had done this did there appear to be any prospects of his obtaining the money of which he was so much in need. Hence, to him, it appeared to be his only alternative and he went to work.

He went to work not like an artisan with his model in full view; not like a tradesman with his purpose understood, but rather like a corrupt politician, stealthily working his way into the confidence of his victims, and contaminating all who were brought and dared to linger in his association.

Relentless and determined, careful and methodical, he pursued his despicable purpose with no apparent hesitancy. And so stealthy and discreet was he, that every man he approached was unaware that anybody else in the whole city had knowledge of the nefarious scheme; and in fact, most of them for a long time really believed that themselves and Sanderson were

the only persons that were "next" to the proposition.

And so days followed days and weeks went by. Each day's low descending sun marked some further action done toward the accomplishment of the corrupt plan. Relentless, stubborn, determined, recklessly indifferent to right and wrong and foolhardy to the greatest extreme, the city attorney gradually wove the web of corruption that seemed to reach every avenue of public affairs in the great city. Even the city itself seemed to be placed in a compromising position. Officers high up in the councils of the city; men with records heretofore spotless and unsullied; and men of little force and influence were alike drawn into compromising attitudes with reference to the infamous conspiracy.

Meanwhile, Hastings the cashier, was having his troubles, too. From the healthy, athletic figure that he had once appeared, he had come to wear on his emaciated face an expression of fear, and his weakened nerves gave way in sudden starts at the least little commotion. Instead of a steady, graceful step that characterized his walk, he now moved in a quick, nervous, and excited manner, as if he expected to run against

something any instant and was keeping himself in readiness to dodge.

His friends noticed the change in him and wondered at it. His family saw it, and his wife scolded him for working so hard. The officers and employees at the bank noticed it and cautioned him because of his failing health. Fortunately for him they did not know or surmise the cause for his nervous condition.

How he succeeded in keeping the shortage from discovery is a wonder. The vigilance of the bankers and employees was only frustrated by the cashier's own extreme vigilance. Every day developed new dangers which were avoided only by the precautionary methods of an acute memory and strict attention to business. Every day the cashier lost a little more hope and looked a little more worried. Every day he went to the city attorney with his troubles and asked a thousand and one questions to ascertain whether prospects were better or worse. Every night he lay down upon his sleepless bed a little nearer worn out than he was the night before, and the cloud was already shedding its gloom upon the family circle.

Four or five weeks had passed away since his hasty, undiscovered flight, and he had en-

dured a suspense and fear that was fast becoming unendurable. During all this time Sanderson had given him no definite information as to what he had done. He had simply told the cashier his general opinion that things were working nicely. This seemed to satisfy the cashier for a while; but burning with constant fear of detection, he began to think that something definite ought to develop and he determined to learn just exactly what had been done.

One day, about this time, Hastings and Sanderson were closeted in the office of the city attorney and enjoying their usual smoke. The working hours for the day had passed and all was quiet about. After a little introductory conversation the cashier brought up the subject of the shortage.

"I tell you, Sandy, something has got to be done about that shortage."

"Oh, shortage! shortage! shortage! I get so tired o' hearing about that. I wish you would keep still about the d——n thing."

"Keep still! The ———! How can I? The blame thing is killing me. You got me into it and agreed to stand back of me. Now,

for God's sake, don't get tired of it and forsake me."

"I haven't said I was going to forsake you. Further still I never will forsake you. I'm doing the best I can to make the money, and after a few more days of patience, everything will come out all right."

"That's what you have been telling me for the last month," replied Hastings, "and I am thinking it's about time that I see something tangible develop. You've been so close-mouthed all the time that you couldn't tell me how the deal is coming on. I'd like to know something about the facts in the case and be at liberty to judge for myself as to what the prospects are for a realization out of the scheme sufficient to cover our shortage."

"Well, you know, Joe, that I have been out of the city for several days attending the Democratic convention at the metropolis, and before I went away nothing had happened that I could tell you that was very encouraging. I'm sure I'd just as soon tell you what a muss I got into, if you want to know."

"Want to know! Well, I want to know something pretty d——d quick. They've been putting off the counting of the cash for a long

time just because I manufactured excuses, and it's got now where I have run out of excuses. They're apt to take up that work any day; and just as sure as they do, the jig is up—that's a cinch. With me it's a question of the Industrial City or South Africa; and with indications very much in favor of the latter. Go ahead, let's hear it."

Sanderson lighted a fresh cigar, leaned back in his chair, threw his feet up on the table and began:

"Well, you remember that first day that I met Cramer, that New York man, the day that you and I took dinner at Chapman's restaurant together. Well, after that we had various meetings along, and Cramer desired me to show to him that the newspapers would support the project and advocate the deal by favoring the granting of the franchise to the New York parties. I told him that that was not necessary; if he didn't think I could take care of this end of the deal, I didn't care to deal with him. The matter was practically left in that situation for a time; but another fellow by the name of Kaylor turned up, and Baxter informed me that they were insisting on some kind of a showing before they would put up

the money. So I saw that I was up against it to show them that the papers would either favor the proposition or keep still."

"Tom Baxter said that the eastern parties were getting rather warm under the collar, and he was afraid that they would back out of the deal entirely and we would not get hold of the money. He wanted me to write an opinion setting forth the estimated valuation of the city, the bonded indebtedness, the amount of water that was used and where it was used from, the necessity of having a pure water supply, and that the city never had defaulted in its interest charges."

"I refused to write the opinion but Baxter wrote the opinion himself, and brought it to me to sign. I refused to sign it, but I guess the cuss signed it for me and sent it on, for I haven't heard any more on that point."

"But I set myself about it to show what I could do with the papers. In the first place the Argus is largely owned and controlled by John Parker. It has all it can do to live and is way behind financially. Parker is a good friend of mine, and he also stands back of the mayor with his paper. I met the mayor down town one night, after council, and we took

lunch together at Chapman's restaurant. I told him all about our deal and asked him to come with us into the deal. He said that these fellows didn't have any money. I told him about the talk I had had with Baxter and also the talk with Cramer.

"I told him my arrangement with the New York parties was that I was to have $10,000 paid down and $50,000 contingent. 'Well,' I said, 'if they have got any money, you are satisfied to enter into the matter with me?' He said that he would on condition that he should have a third of the proceeds. I had told him that I had had a talk with Parker, and that I would have to give him a third for the support of the paper, so we talked over our plan. I was to use the paper just as I saw fit to, and we decided that the paper should advocate the Willow Springs as the proper source for a pure water supply. In fact, the mayor had been advocating the Willow Springs plan before this matter came on. He had taken the position that the Willow Springs was the proper thing. We had been up the river, etc., and his theory was that he should advocate the Willow Springs plan, and the paper should advocate that plan, until such time as we thought it wise to turn the paper over. The

scheme was to get the other papers to support the Lake Michigan deal, and the theory was that if the mayor's paper started out to support the Lake Michigan deal with the New York people, why, the other papers would go against it. They would go against anything the mayor advocated. He advocated the Willow Springs project with a view and sole purpose of getting the other papers first on record to support this eastern deal."

"Well, so far, so good. The next thing to do was to get next to the Courier. I had two or three conversations with the high-muck-a-muck over there, and outlined to him in substance what I had told Parker of the Argus. I don't think I told him things as fully as I did Parker, but about the same, and tried at first to get him to support this proposition without paying him anything, the same as I did the others. I wanted the money that was promised me to make our shortage good. I found, however, that they would not any of them do anything, as long as there was money coming here unless they got some out of it, and he wanted $10,000 to advocate the scheme. He said to me, 'The Courier represents all the citizens, and can do more good to you than any other

paper.' But I held him down, and we finally agreed upon $5,000. He telephoned me several times about it, in the meantime, that they were not going to do anything until I paid the $5,000, and I had said to the eastern fellows that I would take care of the newspapers. So there I was up against it again. I couldn't pay the Courier until the New York parties came down with the cash, and I couldn't get the cash from them until the paper gave evidence that it was fixed."

"So, you see that's the way I've been up against it all the way through this deal. In the first place, if I could have got a hold of that $25,000 that they promised to pay me down, there is where the whole matter would have ended, for I should have paid up our shortage, and dropped the deal. But as I went along and got into the matter, I found that I could not make any showing at all sufficient where I thought they would put up the $25,000 without taking in various people, and when I began to interest various people in it, then I had to begin to divide the money."

"Well, one morning two or three weeks ago Baxter called me up by phone and notified me that the $25,000 had come and was in one of

the banks of the city, but that he could not get the money until Mr. Kaylor himself got here, because it had been sent to Mr. Kaylor himself and payable to Mr. Kaylor. Baxter urged me to be ready with evidence of the showing I had accomplished because Kaylor was "leary" of my ability to accomplish the purpose, and he was hesitating about putting up the money."

"A day or two later, he called me over to his office, said he had got the $25,000, and wanted to know how much of it was coming to him. He wanted half of it, $12,500, but I kicked on his having that sum and refused to carry the deal any further unless he accepted less. Because, I told him, I had promised fifteen thousand dollars. Then he wanted ten thousand, but we finally compromised on eight thousand and he turned over to me the balance, seventeen thousand dollars."

"I took the money and went to my office and immediately went down to the mayor's private office over in the block, and paid him a third of the $10,000 I had told him I was to receive down. I also paid Parker his third, for I had made the same bargain with him, and kept my word with the Courier and

passed over five thousand dollars there. This left a balance of five thousand dollars to apply on the shortage; but I have held on to it on the theory that they would be just as apt to discover a ten thousand dollar shortage as a fifteen thousand dollar shortage; and in case of an emergency, it would come pretty handy to have five thousand on hand."

"You ought to put that right over to the bank as soon as possible," interrupted the cashier.

"Now hold on. Wait 'till I get done. Then you may have the floor. It's perfectly safe; but if anything happens that the shortage should be discovered and you fill your pockets from the bank and leave the country, I may have to have some money to protect my carcass with. But that's neither here nor there, for I haven't finished my story."

"After matters had reached this stage of the game, I felt that the eastern fellows were in dead earnest and I insisted that we would not do anything, or would not pay out anything in the council to make an outward effort, until the seventy-five thousand dollars was brought here and deposited in accordance with my agreement with Cramer and Baxter. I had them on the

hip and they knew it. I have been in the metropolis three or four days attending the Democratic state convention. We had quite a lively time down there and nominated Maywall for Governor. While I was there, I got a telephone message from Baxter. He called me up at the Cadillac Hotel and told me that the $75,000 was here; that a man had brought it here in a grip. I had made the agreement with Cramer and Baxter that this money should be deposited with you at the Industrial City Bank, and I told him that there wasn't any thing to do; he had my terms, and to simply put the money up with you as agreed; that I wouldn't come home or bother with it until the convention was over, and I didn't come home until we got through. I supposed, of course, that you had the money. Didn't Baxter, or anybody else, make a deposit of $75,000 with you?"

"No sir; they have not. The deposits for the last week have been unusually small."

"Well, it's d——n funny."

Sanderson looked bothered, as he nervously turned his cigar over and over between his fingers and remained silent for some time.

Hastings brightened up and looked more hopeful than he had appeared to be for months before.

The attorney arose and as he packed up the papers on his desk he said:

"You know, Joe, I have been gone several days and I worked hard during the whole time. It's strenuous work to attend a state convention and I am tired out. It's too late to do anything tonight, and I just got in on the last train. I think we had better let the matter rest until morning and I'll look up the situation. I confess that I can't understand why they didn't do as they agreed, but I'll bring them to time, I think."

Joseph Hastings went home that night in a more congenial state of mind than he had experienced for several months, and his wife was surprised at his marked improvement.

With the next morning dawned a dismal day. The north wind that had been moderating the temperature for a couple of days back had changed in the course of the night to an easterly direction, and a cold rain was steadily falling. It was just the kind of a day to make one appreciate the beautiful sunshine and realize how much we are blessed, after all, by having so

much of the pleasant and so little of the cloudy weather.

Hastings arrived at the bank early and went about his work in an unusually cheerful manner. A number of the clerks expressed themselves as of the opinion he was looking greatly improved in health, and the cashier might have told them that he had a good night's rest the night before for the first time in a long while, but he left them to surmise for themselves the cause of his improved appearance.

The dismal character of the day, and the probability of a very light business, prompted the proposition on the part of the bank officials to make a counting of the cash. Hastings was alarmed, but did not dare to enter a protest in view of his appearance of renewed vigor, and also, because of the fact that he had made so many excuses before in postponing the work. But in spite of his silence and composure in the matter, his nervousness was unmistakably noticeable, and it was afterwards learned that the suspicions of the president were somewhat aroused by the apparent reluctance of the cashier to take up this most essential work.

Of course it became necessary for the cashier to get his wits to work to contrive in

some manner to have $15,300, counted twice, or have the money brought in from Sanderson's alleged amounts supposed to be already in the city. The latter seemed to be the most feasable scheme. The first opportunity that was afforded he called the city attorney's office by phone, but that official had not come down and he was unable to get word to Sanderson about what was going on at the bank until nearly noon. Then it was by messenger and not directly, so that he got no word back. The work went on until one of the bookkeepers was puzzling over an apparent discrepancy in one of the books. He called Hastings to his side for an explanation. The cashier was very much excited, but conducted himself in a very natural manner, and told the clerk that he could explain it to him in a few moments, but that he was very busy with some other work just at that time, and he requested the clerk to lay it aside until a little later.

The cashier was playing a bold hand, but he played it well. It was about twelve o'clock when the president of the bank stepped to the stall occupied by the clerk who thought he had discovered an error in the books, and in all candor the clerk called his attention to

"Hastings saw them figuring over the page."—*Page 215.*

the error. Hastings saw them studying and figuring over the page, and knew that they had discovered some of the figures he had tampered with in making the books agree with the cash on hand in readiness for this very occasion, but he went on with his work and appeared not to notice them. He was getting ready to leave when the president called him and asked for an explanation of the figures. The cashier replied that he had not had any time to look over the figures yet; and as he had a headache and was very hungry, he desired to go to lunch and he would return in a few minutes and straighten the matter out.

When Hastings made this plausible excuse for delay, he wore an expression of excitement on his face, and it was a perfect give-way to the observing president who, nevertheless, was too discreet to permit his suspicions to be noticed by others, and for the time the matter was allowed to pass. When Hastings went out of the bank to lunch, he carried with him an extra ten thousand dollars in large bills and a serious thought that he might never return.

He cared not for the lunch, but went, instead, directly to the city attorney's office where he found Sanderson awaiting him in

compliance with his request sent by messenger. Pulling the roll of bills from his pocket when the door was closed and they were shut in, he said: "Here is ten thousand dollars more added to the shortage, if we don't raise the other $15,300 inside of twenty minutes, for I need this much to get safely away. I know there's no other way out of it, now, and I've come up simply to ask you to pay a thousand of this to my wife as soon as you can and look after her until I see you again." As the cashier said this his eyes filled with tears, and he counted out a thousand dollars in bills of large denominations, and then continued as he shook the attorney's hand, "I am awful sorry, Sandy, but I have been afraid of this. I'll send my letters to you and you will deliver them to my wife. Because, you know, I wouldn't dare to send them to her directly for fear they would be intercepted and my location discovered. So good-bye, old man. It'll be a long cold day before they get me."

This was said in a quick, nervous way, and Hastings was already going out of the door when Sanderson grabbed him by the collar, brought him back, slammed the door, and told him to sit down.

"What kind of a spell have you been having, anyway?" said Sanderson. "Come out of it! Use a little reason. Here I have tugged and tugged to straighten out matters and just at the moment of victory you are going about it deliberately to upset all the work I have accomplished."

"Now, Sandy, I haven't got time to talk. I've got to do something. If I'm going, I must hurry. If you've got any better plan what is it? Quick!"

"Now, hold on a minute. Just hold yourself. The bank will stay there until you get back; and if you do as I say, you're all right. I jumped Baxter this morning because they hadn't put that money in your charge, and he said I should send you up to his office. He will give you the key to the vault over in the Trust Building, and you can go over there, get the $15,300 and make the shortage good before you return to the bank. Baxter is in his office waiting for you now. Keep a stiff upper-lip and go on."

Hastings had not hoped for such a change in the prospects. He followed out Sanderson's orders and returned to the bank with the sum sufficient to pay up the entire shortage.

The clerks, and the president expected a sensation to follow the counting of the cash; but the book showings and the amount on hand tallied to a cent, and the terrible shortage was at last squared and discovery was avoided.

But the shortage had got a great many people tied up in a big fraudulent deal that couldn't be dropped or squared so easily, and we will look further into the matter in the chapters that follow.

XXII.

TWO IMPORTANT EVENTS.

HARVEY B. Morgan was a busy man. In the few years that had passed since his father's death he had confined his attention almost entirely to the practice of law. By so doing, he had succeeded in building up an extensive clientage; and by his varied experiences he had added to his superior fund of knowledge. A busy man, though he was, he found time to make frequent visits to Uncle Reuben Haynes' home at Wayfield, and never failed in an opportunity to take special interest in political matters, for he looked upon the right of franchise as a duty as well as a privilege.

It was the last summer of the nineteenth century. The summer that has gone down in history characterized by corruption probably as thoroughly as any other time in the history of the American Republic. The political pot was boiling over with enthusiasm in regard to the nomination for the various officers of the commonwealth. Millionaire candidates were pitted against one another in the competitive race for

gubernatorial honors. It was a case of the big candidates swallowing the little ones, and some one opened the money barrels and filthy lucre flowed as freely as rain drops in a summer shower.

The good people were put to shame. All the beautiful sentiments of patriotism in politics were laughed to scorn. All the patriotic chords of partisanship were eliminated and its purposes subverted by the debauchery of the conniving politician of newspaper fame. Many loyal citizens became exasperated over the condition of affairs and threw aside all political interests, regarding it as an unclean thing and unworthy of notice except to avoid.

This was not the case with Morgan. He considered that the more depraved a people became, the more they were in need of reform. He looked upon it as his duty to step into the fray and join forces for the betterment of the conditions; and everywhere in the thick of the battle he was found, firm as a rock, the embodiment of principle, pursuing commendable tactics, and wielding an enviable influence in the interests of good politics.

In June at the state convention culminated the enthusiasm over the Republican nominations

for state officers, and in July interest in the nominations for county officers reached its zenith at the Republican county convention. Then all politicians turned their eyes toward members of the state legislature, for there was to be a United States senator elected at the coming session of the law-making body, and it was important in political circles that Senator Blank should be re-elected in order that John Doe, Jim Roe, etc., might continue to hold down their jobs.

The city, under the rules of law governing the basis of representation, was entitled to three representatives in the house, and one member in the state senate. The senator was renominated by acclamation and without opposition; but for the memberships in the house, there was a lively battle on.

From the beginning no one of the aspirants had victory as a foregone conclusion. It was a close battle, hard fought. At first one candidate seemed to be the favorite and then another seemed to be in the lead. Each had his friends and followers. Some of these were friends because they wanted some favor of the aspirant; some were friends because they were after a job; some were friends because they were told

by the boss to do so; and occasionally a friend because the individual knew the aspirant, or thought he did, and had faith in him.

And so the political battle progressed. Morgan was interested in the outcome in behalf of a part of the candidates and in behalf of the public. He had reached that point where he believed something ought to be done for the purpose of eliminating corruption from the nominating system of the party organization; and to that end, he was interesting himself to secure the nomination to the state legislature of men who were of the same opinion as himself regarding the corrupt practices that had stamped with ignominy the looseness and imperfections of the system in vogue.

The time for the convention came round in the closing days of August. The Lincoln Club rooms were filled to overflowing. Their seating capacity was nearly all utilized by the delegates, while the remaining seats and all standing room was occupied by interested spectators. Excitement was at a high tension. Squire Finney was in the chair, and from his exalted position passed upon parliamentary questions with remarkable precision. The work of organizing the convention was readily perfected; the

enthusiasm of the audience was touched off by several short, spicy bursts of eloquence; and meanwhile, the hall rang with cheering shouts for the various candidates.

Bates, from the west side, was the first nominee of the convention, and VanDusen from the north end was nominated as the second member without opposition. There remained but one more member to be nominated and there were two candidates for this place. Short, spicy and eloquent speeches were made by the gentlemen who placed the names of these candidates before the convention, and the balloting was promptly begun.

There were seventy-five delegates in the convention. On the first ballot one of the candates received twenty-nine, the other received thirty-one, and twelve votes were given for various other persons indicating a dissatisfaction with all of the candidates whose names had been placed before the convention. The second ballot resulted exactly the same as the first. The third ballot showed but a slight change in the loss of one vote by one of the candidates, and so on through the fourth, fifth, sixth, and up until the sixteenth ballot.

The hour was late, The delegates were tired out A part of the spectators had tired of the monotony of the balloting and had gone away. But the deadlock was noised abroad in extra issues of the Evening Courier; new comers had more than filled the places of those who had left; and new life and interest seemed to be instilled into the audience and kept the enthusiasm at a high pitch even to the last.

At the close of the sixteenth ballot it was evident that nothing could be accomplished without a change of tactics, and a member of the convention ventured to move for an adjournment until the following day. This brought to his feet a prominent member of the convention who thereupon proceeded to unload one of his spontaneous bursts of eloquence in behalf of one of the deadlock candidates and opposed the proposition to adjourn in which he was loudly cheered by his co-adherents.

When the speaker had resumed his seat and the cheering had subsided, those of the other side were looking one to the other to see who was going to take up the battle in their interests. In this moment of hesitancy a voice back among the spectators shouted, "Morgan." No one knew why; but like a flock of sheep

following the impulses of their leader other voices took up the cry and rang down through the hall until it was "Morgan, Morgan, Harvey B. Morgan" by so many voices that nothing else could be heard, and it seemed as if nothing else would do but a response from Morgan.

He was at his wits end to know what to do and where to begin; but with his heart fairly jumping, he walked down the aisle, hesitatingly and with apparent reluctance, and was fairly pushed and forced along by the eager delegates and spectators that filled the greater portion of the aisle.

His hesitancy was but for a moment, however, for as he reached the rostrum, with an agile move he sprang to the speaker's place; and with an aptness and exactness never to be forgotten, he launched into a theme above and away from the petty jealousies and personalities of a modern political convention, and sent his voice ringing down through the hall and corridors with the zeal and feeling that has characterized the speeches of America's greatest orators and made their names immortal.

Aside from the voice of the speaker not a sound could be heard in the room. He grasped the scepter of leadership with a mighty grasp,

and commanded the attention and admiration of many that were unwilling. The words flowed from his lips like the rain drops in an April shower and sank deep, creating emotions in the hearts of his listeners.

In a calm, deliberate but energetic manner he began, "Gentlemen of the Convention: To me it is a mystery what prompted the call for me to appear, but I assure you that I appreciate the honor none the less. I am glad you have called me, for I never would have dared to take upon myself the responsibility without your invitation; and when I have finished, if you think I am too radical, you have no one to blame but yourselves for having given me this opportunity to speak. I am glad today to be with you and work hand in hand for the cause of the great political organization that has been making the history of this country for the last forty years. And now the most important decade in our nation's history is drawing to a close."

"The great question of capital and labor has characterized the decade with numerous strikes and dissensions throughout the whole Union. Radical changes in our tariff laws have at times affected our markets more or less

seriously; stringency in the money market created a national political issue that threatened to disrupt the two great political parties; Christian races that deserve our protection have suffered from the hands of the savages in the east; the principles of the Monroe Doctrine placed us in a critical position in relation with Great Britain at one time; and the stars and stripes have again been carried to the front and to victory by the boys of '98. In the more recent part of the decade a republican administration, by its principles of sound money, has maintained the stability of our currency; by protection and reciprocity it re-established our markets; by its statesmanship and diplomacy it established the most friendly relations between this country and the great powers of Europe; by its management of the war with Spain it demonstrated the fact that the United States are henceforth entitled to recognition among the greatest maritime powers of the world; and by its general administration of public affairs, one internal improvement has followed another, until from the shipyards of Maine to the vineyards of California, the industries of our country are throbbing under the impulses of prosperity." (Applause.)

"Under the Republican administration of governmental affairs during the past forty years, the good ship of state has been guided from the thralls of slavery to the highest degree of universal freedom; from bondage to foreign commerce to a leadership in the commerce of the world; and from an undeveloped political organization to one of the leading powers of the world, until we are a nation of people of the highest type of civilization; a nation of people second to no other in progress, industry, and enlightenment; a nation of people proud of our standard of education, proud of the institution of our government, of the people, for the people and by the people, and proud of every star and every stripe on our nation's flag—the emblem of liberty to man, honor to God, and good will everywhere." (Prolonged applause.)

After the long and tiresome work of balloting these remarks were as awakening as a thunder bolt from a clear sky. The extreme eloquence of his delivery, and the intense emotion exhibited in his expression, carried his listeners away with overwhelming enthusiasm. For a half hour he carried his audience through the main issues of the political campaign and handled without gloves the subject of the bosses

"Carried his listeners away with overwhelming enthusiasm."—*Page 228.*

and their corrupt practices. When he had finished, he resumed his seat amid the cheers and shouts of several hundred people, while his old friends fairly climbed over one another in their efforts to get to him with their heart-felt congratulations.

In the midst of the confusion some one in the lobby shouted, "What's the matter with Morgan." Three hundred voices shouted back with the full volume of their force, "He's all right," and as soon as a single voice could be heard, Alderman Patterson, a delegate in the convention, jumped to his feet and moved, "That the rules be suspended and Harvey B. Morgan be declared the nominee of this convention for a membership in the State Legislature." This served to add fuel to the flames of excitement and once more the hall rang with the noise suggestive of bedlam. The chairman had great difficulty in restoring sufficient order to put the motion to a vote; and when he succeeded, the announcement of the result making Morgan the unanimous nominee of the convention renewed the tumult and excitement, and it was many minutes before quietness could be restored sufficient to take the usual vote on the proposition to adjourn.

The next day the king bees in the political hive were closeted together at the metropolis of the state, and also at the capital city, and among other things were considering how they were to thwart the avowed purpose of the new candidates from the Industrial City.

A spirited campaign followed. But with the popular and beloved William McKinley as the national standard bearer of the Republican organization nearly everything in the commonwealth resulted in Republican victory. In fact, there was but one Democrat elected to the State senate and ten Democratic members elected to the house of representatives.

A few days after the election was over Morgan was called to go to Oklahoma to look after the interests of a client who had secured a large tract of newly opened territory by purchase. After several days in the territory he returned by way of the Santa Fe route to Chicago; and never having been permitted to visit this metropolis of the west before, he made plans to stay over until the next day and take a little leisure, sightseeing, and seeking entertainment.

A great deal of curiosity was satisfied and considerable information obtained by going through the great pork and beef butchering

and packing establishment of Swift & Company, and in the evening he occupied a seat in the front row of the first balcony at McVicker's theatre.

The play was a tragedy among the moonshiners of Kentucky, and the plot involved a typical Kentucky feud. The members of the large, excellent orchestra had assumed their respective stations, and the strains of the opening overture began to fill the spacious room with music. Just as the outer curtains were raised in readiness for the opening scene, three ladies came in; and as the stage lights were turned on and the other lights off, they occupied the three seats at the left of our friend Morgan.

At the close of the first act when the lights were turned on, Morgan was greatly surprised to look squarely into the face of his old friend and playmate of former years, Maude Halliday. He was no more surprised than she was and she showed her surprise as she called him by the name she had used to call him twenty years before.

There is no use of covering up the truth, and it is the most convenient to come out with the fact that from that moment to the close of the play these two persons took little interest,

either in the scenery or in the play itself. Neither knew the emotions that the other felt. Each had the other uppermost in mind. They visited between acts and wondered between visits, regarding each the other.

But the circumstances were such that each of them felt compelled to be reserved. Six years had rolled away since Miss Halliday had so hastily left Wayfield without giving Morgan the notice that he thought he was entitled to, and never since that time had he been able to surmise a sufficient excuse whereby he could overlook the matter as unintentional; and while he had the same affection for her that had grown with the years, still he did not feel at liberty to talk and act as he felt. Besides this, he thought that six years was a long time; and as far as he knew, Miss Halliday might be a married lady. If so, he felt that if he should ask her, it would be a wound to his sense of pride to be informed affirmatively. So he left the question unasked, and endeavored to draw conclusions from such facts as were dropped in the general conversation. On the other hand, Miss Halliday knew nothing about what had been the lot of her playmate during the six years just past. She was thinking of the pleasant

times that had passed in those days when they were together before. She knew the big heart that was beating within his breast, and she knew there was a tender spot there for her, but she could not understand why he had never answered the letter she had sent him when she was called away so suddenly to her father's death-bed. She had never felt that she was at liberty to write again inasmuch as he had never replied to the other letter when she was so sorely in need of a friend. So all through these years her love for Morgan had been whipped down by her wounded pride, but it was there yet as strong as ever. Still, like Morgan, she was reserved—cheerful, and talkative but reserved.

In this way the evening passed all too soon. The play was over and the great crowds arose to go. They were already several yards away from the seats they had occupied, and Morgan was considering the advisability of seeking further conference with Miss Halliday by offering to accompany her home when she suddenly exclaimed, "There! I have forgotten my opera glasses and left them on the seat," and she started back to get them. Morgan offered to go and get them and turned back. He found

them all right, but just at that moment there was a fierce flash of light behind the curtain on the stage and a loud voice sounded through the building, "fire!" A panic ensued; but the exits from the building were many and plentiful. Though there appeared to be no particular harm done by the panic, the people came out and stood around waiting to see how the fire came out. Morgan was among those who took a sober second thought and walked out leisurely after the panic was over, but he had become separated from Miss Halliday, and her companions and was unable to find them again. For fully an hour he walked up and down the street in the hope that he might catch sight of them, but to no avail.

At last he gave up in despair and exclaimed, "Well, it isn't the first time she left me, but I don't think she is altogether to blame this time. She has left me a souvenir this time, too, for I'll keep these opera-glasses until she calls for them."

This event cast a spell over Morgan's life. He was loth to acknowledge it, but he knew in his own heart that he had a feeling and a longing for this woman that had been growing ever since they were playmates in childhood. He

could understand why she had not waited for him where he had left her; but he could not understand why she had not waited for him on the outside where he had looked so persistently to find her, and he was gloomy and sad as he went to his room at the Northern Hotel and retired for the night.

XXIII.

SANDERSON MAKES DISCLOSURE.

ONCE more the cold wintry blasts were howling. Mother earth had donned a coat of clear white crystals to a uniform depth of two feet or more. The merry sleigh-bells were jingling through the streets from early morn until late at night. And the outside world was cold and dreary making the man feel happy that chanced to have a cheery fireside to occupy as the north wind whistled threateningly around his home.

Joseph Hastings had taken his dinner down town that night because of the fact that his wife and family had gone for a few days' visit to another city, and he was left at home alone. He found his home the most comfortable place to stay, and pulling an elegant leather-bound rocker up to the lighted fire-place, he settled down with his favorite brand of cigar and the Evening Courier for a pleasant pastime.

There was news in the paper concerning national and international affairs; the politics of the state received considerable notice; and

several columns were devoted to the newly seated legislature at the capital city. All these were carefully perused and then came the stock market and grain market reports. This was a portion of the paper that Hastings had given little attention since the deals had closed that had created the memorable shortage. But alone this night he glanced carefully down through the various schedules of the market report and then carelessly threw the paper upon the center table. As he idly puffed his cigar, he closed his eyes and saw again those scenes he had lived through, but while living had grown old faster than ever before.

He thought how foolhardy it had been for him in the first place to go into the deal; he saw again how he had given up to terror and despair and nearly taken the life of another; he saw himself again in flight with no cause save his own guilty conscience; and he saw, too, that while he had made restitution, he was still guilty of, and liable to prosecution for acts made criminal by the United States banking laws.

In this trend of mind his nerves were wrought up to their greatest tension; and when he realized his surroundings again, he was

sitting up as straight as a post and staring into the fire like one overcome with fright. Then he shook himself, apparently, and tried to settle down and forget it all.

"I wonder," said he to himself, "if Sandy is making any more deals. Shouldn't be surprised if he is. Darndest, luckiest fellow I ever saw. Just like him to make a lot of money in some such way yet. What a lucky dog he was to get next to those water deal devils, and get money to pay up the shortage. I wonder how this water deal is coming on, anyway. I haven't ———."

Just then a ring of the door bell sounded through the house and Hastings, wondering who might be the comer, hastened to the door.

When the door was opened in walked Sanderson to speak for himself. His derby hat and his long heavy overcoat were covered with snow; and as the door closed, a gust of wind sent the pearly white crystals half way across the room.

"Gee! But it's a stunner, Joe. Pretty near took my breath coming down the avenue, and the sidewalks are drifted full a good share of the way. How are you, anyway? I haven't

seen you much lately and my folks all went away to spend the holidays and haven't come back yet, and I was lonesome and thought I'd come over and see you a little while. Where's the folks?"

"My folks are gone, too," replied Hastings, "all except the furnace-man and I guess he's gone for the night."

"Well, well, we're lucky, arn't we? We can talk over old times, or anything else, and there is no one to disturb us."

"Sure, and what do you think? It is an old saying that if you talk about the devil his angel doth appear. I wasn't thinking about his Satanic Majesty, but I was thinking about you the very moment you knocked at the door."

"Is that so?"

"Yes; I was wondering how you were coming along with your little water deal."

"Little! It's not so LITTLE as it might be."

No; I suppose not, but how's it coming?" replied Hastings, as he extended the ever ready box of cigars and beckoned the attorney to supply himself in good old-fashioned generosity.

"Well, I'll tell you," replied Sanderson hesitatingly, as he struck a match on the hearth

and applied it to the other end of one of the famous Havana blue-tops that were so popular among smokers in those days, "but I assure you, Joe, that if I keep smoking all the time I'm telling it, there won't be as many cigars in that box as there were when I started. There's a lot to it and don't you ever think there isn't."

"Never mind the cigars, Sandy. There's another box packed away up in the smoking room; and if that isn't enough, we'll order some more."

"And it's what do we care for the weather when gay fellows get together."

"Ah! Come off, Sandy. That's a chestnut! Go on with your story."

"Well, here she goes, Joe; you remember all I told you about it before, and all about the whole deal up to the time we got the $75,000 and paid up the shortage? Well, I'll commence there and tell you what we've been doing since that time."

"You see after those New York fellows had put up twenty-five thousand dollars in the venture, I knew that they were in dead earnest. So after "fixing" the papers, I set my foot down that we would not do anything or

would not pay out anything in the council to make any further outward effort until the seventy-five thousand dollars was brought here and deposited in accordance with my agreement with Cramer and Baxter. Consequently, when the seventy-five thousand came, we had to begin to do business with the various 'powers that be' of the city.

"About this time the editor of the Industrial City Record got onto our scheme some way or other and began to write some articles that were threatening to disclose the whole deal, and it behooved me to get next to him. I always knew he was a political grafter and blackmailer, but I found him the meanest devil I ever dealt with. He was strictly 'on the hog.' I didn't know him very well, so I got another fellow to go and see him, and found that he demanded $10,000 in cash. I couldn't pay that sum so I let it drag along awhile, and then some more articles came out, until they got to where I made up my mind the devil would kill the whole thing unless he was stopped, so I asked him to come up to my office. He came and brought with him an article which he had written up which included a history of the whole deal. He said that unless I paid him the money then and there, he would

run the article in the next issue. I was up against it; and I forked over the $10,000 and the article was killed. He was a high priced devil but I got him.

"Well, to make a long story short as possible, I got down to work. You see we had got the papers 'fixed' already; and as far as the people are concerned, three-fourths of them let some little one-horse editor do their thinking for them any way. We didn't give a d——n for the rest; so the next thing was to get after the council.

"I went after the council. Then the fun commenced. I talked with two aldermen from one ward, and two from another, one from another, one from still another, and so on clear down to the twelfth ward. For the sake of luck I skipped the thirteenth and talked with a couple of high toned guys on the board of public works. I told all of them that there was a matter which was going to be brought before the council in relation to getting a water supply, and that the people were here and desired to put up some money, and that there was an opportunity for them all to make some money out of it, and I'll be cussed if I didn't get the whole ——— ——— bunch."

Here the attorney chuckled gleefully as he hesitated to relight his cigar.

"So you see, it isn't such a little deal after all. But I haven't fairly got started yet. I'll have to tell you what a time I had trying to get Potter from the fourteenth ward. He was an alderman and had been kicking up considerable fuss in the council; and while we had a sufficient number to pass our measure, there was danger of his getting onto things and doing something that would turn things upside down. In that case the fellows I had 'fixed' wouldn't have the backbone to stand pat, so I thought it was wise to see if something couldn't be done to keep him quiet. The question was how to do it; I didn't know. Finally, I thought of a scheme. Our family physician was a great friend of a certain young fellow who had been a classmate of Potter's, and I tackled the doctor and told him all about the scheme and asked him to see the fellow and get the fellow to see Potter and I put up $5,000 for that part of the fracas. I didn't care who got the five thousand, just so we got Potter fixed.

"Well, that was about the only time we fell down. I don't know whether it was because Potter was too honest or whether he is afraid of

the cars. At any rate they couldn't touch him; but he has evidently not caught onto the deal, exactly, for he has not troubled us any so far.

"About this time there was another fellow from the east end came to me one night when the first resolution went to the council and charged that it was my scheme, and he stood talking to me at my desk in the council chamber. I said to him, 'Well, you don't want to talk with me here. You come into my office after the council;' and he came in my office and I said it was my scheme and that it would be right for him to understand it and took him in and discussed the matter all over with him and agreed to pay him one thousand dollars. I also agreed to give him later five thousand dollars of bonds and finally did pay him the same as I did the aldermen. So you see, Joe, I've been up against it all the way along."

"But it's a caution, Joe, how I paid out that money. You remember when you and I went and got it out of the vault. Well, I speculated with some of it and bet on the election, and in all I lost about $8,000 in that way. I paid his excellency, the mayor, $13,750, the Argus $13,750 and the Record $10,000. Then I paid all of the alderman I have mentioned,

except Potter, and a couple of other guys from $350 to $500 each. That's the way it went; and I'll tell you, Joe, the way the blooming thing has developed, it is the most gigantic boodling mix-up that I ever got next to. If the thing should ever go through, and it should be found out that I am at the bottom of it, I would be pinched and sent behind the bars, just as sure as I am living.

"But if they'll just give us time, we'll thwart prosecution and get out all right. You see we don't want to saddle that franchise on to the city. All I am playing for is to get hold of those eastern fellows' money, and when they pay it to us for such a nefarious and infamous purpose they can't get a cent back. They wouldn't dare to prosecute us, for their purpose and acts would be just as criminal as ours.

"Why, Joe, its the biggest thing you ever heard of. We 've got six distinct deals on this minute. You see it is generally understood that the franchise is sought for the purpose of furnishing the city a water supply from Lake Michigan, but nobody knows who the parties are that are hustling for this franchise; and the fact is, we have got six different parties putting up, or about to put up money on this scheme,

each thinking he is the lucky party that is to have the franchise."

Here the attorney chuckled again and paused in his narrative, as he reached over for a fresh smoke and lighted it from the stub he was about to throw away.

"Each end of the deal is being looked after by some special party. Baxter has one end, I have one, Beardsley looks after one, the mayor another, John Parker another, etc. Baxter has a New York party that stands ready to put up $280,000, but he won't put it up unless we make some arrangement where he is sure he is not going to lose his money. The mayor has another party who, he says, has already put up $30,000 and stands ready to put up $250,000 more, just as soon as he can be convinced that it is a sure proposition. Then I have an Omaha party that has already put up $50,000 at Chicago and I'm going after it in a few days. Then there is the Milwaukee deal almost ready to pan out in great shape; and besides these, the deal with the Hydraulic Company which is being looked after by Beardsley. A number of eastern capitalists propose to buy out the Hydraulic Company and get this contract to furnish the city with Lake Michigan water,

and they have agreed to put up $280,000 to secure the contract. However, it is thought necessary to have an act passed through the legislature to amend the charter, and they have advanced $30,000 to pay for this part of the fracas. And we can't get another cent until we show evidences of good faith by securing the passage of this amendment to the charter. There are several other strings out, too, and I think they will pan out richly in a short time, but several of them are waiting for this special act to be passed through the legislature. By so doing, we will show the fellows with the money that we can deliver the goods, and then they will come on with their money. We'll pull in five or six hundred thousand dollars and then call the water deal off. We'll stick the money in our pockets and let them kick. Then, Joe, old boy, we'll never worry over bank shortages any more."

"And now, Joe, I had another purpose besides visiting, in coming down to see you tonight. I notice that you have quit the bank. I am sorry you did, too, but I suppose when it comes to choosing employment you are your own doctor. But, now, you are a pretty likely fellow, Joe, and your banking experience hasn't

done you any hurt when it comes to handling men. And you certainly wouldn't mind stepping aside a few days for the privilege of making a couple of thousand when you can do it so easy, and I want you to take a few days off this week, go down to the capital city, and help us to handle a few of those fellows down there."

"No, sir. You don't get me mixed up in that deal," answered Hastings. "I'd like the couple thousand all right, but I don't want any more of your close shaves. They're too strenuous for me. No, Sandy, you may just count me out of it, first, last, and all the time. You may come out all right, but it's too big a deal for me to get mixed up with. Cut me right out of it, Sandy."

"Now, just hold a bit, Joe. That's your characteristic bull-headedness again. You always fly off the handle before there's any occasion for it. You're just the fellow to approach Morgan and Van Dusen and we've got Bates already. We don't care a ——— for any others; for the measure is strictly local and if our legislators are for it, the whole bunch will support it, seeing that it will concern this city."

"I don't care," replied Hastings, "if I knew they were all with you. I don't want to get

mixed up with the deal and I won't have anything to do with it."

"Oh, yes you will, Joe. It means a great deal to me. Didn't I ever do anything for you? Don't I know things tonight that I might use to send you over the road? I've stood by you like a brother and my demands are trifling; but I demand just the same."

Hastings flushed with anger as he thought of his own long criminal record; but recognizing Sanderson's advantage, he weakened and finally consented to go to the capital city and make the effort to bribe the two members who were not expected to favor the measure. By the follies of his earlier life he had committed himself to a slavery that he was unable to shake off, and he resolved once more to pay the penalty. However, after a perfection of their plans, and understanding his mission fully, he experienced a radical change of heart and really became interested in the work he was about to attempt. Such was his capricious disposition.

So after some further conversation about things in general, their plans were perfected, and the attorney departed for his home, Then Hastings retired to his pillow, possibly to dream of a LITTLE water deal.

XXIV.

HASTINGS AT THE CAPITAL CITY.

TWO or three days after the visit of Sanderson at the home of Hastings, six big, burly, broad shouldered men were conversing in the office of Representative Bates. Bates was making a pretense of the practice of law whenever his limited patronage furnished an opportunity, and he maintained an office in the Hansford block for that purpose. He was a peculiar character, and secured his nomination and election to the House as a mere matter of sufferance. He had been a candidate for this place several times, and had been in the race for prosecuting attorney so long "that the memory of man runneth not to the contrary." He had been ignominiously defeated for this latter place but a few days before the convention nominated him for the House, which it did for the purpose of healing up a few of the old sores.

When the legislature convened, he started into the session with all the arrogance of human nature, developed in ignorance and not refined by culture. Assuming to play the role of a great

statesman, he was sarcastically referred to on the floor of the House as, "The curly headed Solomon from Blackstone." When the session opened, he made two or three speeches that seemed to take pretty well with those who never heard him before, and without difficulty he assumed a leadership; but his unprincipled methods and weaknesses of character would not sustain him, and before the session ended he had difficulty in getting some of his measures through the House. But he was a large, broad-shouldered, and noble looking fellow; and if his character had been as strong as his first appearance, he must have been a power.

Sanderson knew Bates' weakness as did also the mayor. Between the two he was easily brought to the support of the measure regarding the amendment to the charter, and was present to make plans to carry out the work for which, as the story goes, he was to receive five thousand dollars. Baxter, Sanderson, and the mayor were present for mutual interests in the scheme. Hastings was present in accordance with the compact between him and Sanderson, and "the editor of the Record was to receive an extra ten thousand dollars if he kept his damnable paper quiet and allowed

the measure to go through." Such was the statement of Sanderson on a subsequent occasion.

Each one had a plan of his own and placed it before the meeting for consideration, but the editor proposed a plan which seemed to be the most satisfactory. Being ever anxious to better his condition by increasing his opportunities for grafting, he was very much interested in the new primary election bill that was pending in the legislature. He considered that with the convention system eliminated, politicians could not touch elbows at these party reunions, as they had been accustomed to doing, and it would devolve upon the papers almost absolutely to mold public sentiment in the making of nominations. Having at his control the leading paper of a leading county, he could turn a great many dollars into his pocket. With this in view, he had taken great interest in the proposed primary election bill. So the editor proposed that the charter bill be hurried along, and that it be held in readiness to be brought up immediately after the first debate upon the primary election bill, which had been made a special order in the House for a day and hour certain about a week later.

This plan, seemingly the most feasible, was accepted and agreed upon; and the parties, apparently unconcerned about the enormity of their scheme, went their various ways.

In the meanwhile, the bill was properly drafted, and after receiving the sanction of Baxter, was subsequently introduced by Representative Bates in as quiet and unceremonious manner as possible on the day before the primary election bill came up, and on motion of the introducer it was laid on the table.

Hastings alone met with little success in his efforts to carry out his part of the plan. He remained in the capital city during the whole week with little or no apparent purpose, and improved every opportunity to work his way into the society of the representatives from Blackstone county. He invited them, together with the state treasurer and several Senators to dine with him at the Dohney House, and set before them a royal spread. Cunning, however, he did it in the most common-place manner, without any show of interest or any apparent purpose.

Several days sped away before he even had the opportunity and boldness to speak to Morgan regarding the proposed amendments to

the charter, and then he received a look of suspicion from the representative in reply. He dared go no further. Morgan had undoubtedly been wondering what he was staying around for, and the look was one of study as it dawned upon his mind what Hastings was interested in; but Hastings, having a guilty conscience, saw in it open rebellion and gave up in despair.

He had conversed with Van Dusen along the same line, and had received no encouragement. So he picked up, returned to the Industrial City, walked into the presence of the arch conspirator, Sanderson, and reported the results of his efforts.

"Oh, the ———! exclaimed the attorney. I know better; I know you can get them, both of them. Every man's got his price, and we've got the price for them. That's all sentimental rot about your not being able to touch Morgan. I know I can and you can just as well as I can. He isn't so rich but what he needs the "mun" and he will be glad to get it. Now, you get along back and go right after those fellows right off. There's only three more days and I shall expect to hear from you tomorrow night. I want the matter fixed for certain in the two days following this for I expect to go to

Chicago then to look after that end of the deal, and I want everything fixed before I go."

Hastings was rather reluctant and dreaded the undertaking a great deal; but realizing Sanderson's advantage over him, he put away his opposition and resolved to try again in dead earnest.

On the following evening Sanderson received this letter from Hastings which was very gratifying to him.

"Capital City, ———, Feb., ———

Mr. O. P. Sanderson,

Industrial City, ———

Dear Sandy:—

"I came, I saw, I conquered. Everything is all O. K. But say, that Morgan is a caution! I think I can fix Van Dusen if I first get Morgan, but Morgan wants the world with a fence around it and wants everything done just so. He's awfully afraid of the cars. He said he wouldn't tie up on the proposition for less than five thousand, any way, and he requires that it be given him in just a certain manner and with just the precautions he thinks necessary. I laughed at him, but he said it's no use. He won't accept the money unless we do just as he says. He requires that the money shall be in

bills not larger than fifty dollars each, carefully tied up in a wallet, and delivered to him without any other sign of recognition in the south end entrance to the basement to the capitol building at exactly fifteen minutes past eight o'clock p. m. tomorrow. At that hour the entrance will be dark and peering eyes cannot interfere, and he requires that no words be spoken lest they be overheard. He says it is out that there is being money passed around, and he thinks it is necessary to take this precaution, and does not want to be seen speaking to me or anyone else who is in any way connected with, or interested in the water deal scheme. You'll have to see him, and deliver the money yourself or send it by express on the noon train tomorrow as I cannot get away from here. Bates says he needs me here every minute.

Yours truly,

Joseph Hastings."

Sanderson settled back in his chair after reading this and laughed heartily at the extreme precaution exacted by Morgan.

"What's the fool thinking of, any way," said he, expressing his thoughts. "Anybody would know he is a tenderfoot. But I knew Joe would get him if he went after him in the

right way. It's only another evidence that every man has his price. Five thousand dollars is a pretty big temptation to hold under a poor man's nose when there's so little danger of detection. Ha! ha! but he's going to be sure there don't any one else see him. He calculates to fix it so that we can't swear we gave him the money. I think I shall take that money to the capital city myself and I'll take that train that leaves here at 5:30 p. m. tomorrow and get there just in time. I'll bet I'll know him even if it is dark, and then I can take the Grand Trunk train into Chicago. Hastings, the ——— fool, could just as well come up here and get the money and save me the trip down there. But I'm awfully glad that Morgan is taken care of, and there's no more use of worrying for the thing will go through all right without a hitch and I can go to Chicago without any fear at all. Good! Gee! But that is a burden off my mind. But say! I won't have much time at the capital city. My train is due there at eight o'clock. That will give me fifteen minutes to get to the capitol. Let me see—what time does the Grand Trunk start for Chicago after that? Well! Well! I'm lucky, 8:30, that will give me fifteen minutes to make the depot.

"Then he caught sight of a tall figure standing a little back from the doorway."—*Page 259.*

court house showed the time to be fifteen minutes past eight. He went on through the rotunda and down the long corridor to the south end. The light in the rotunda glimmered down through the hall, but in the extreme south end it was really dark. Peering through the darkness he wondered whether any one was there. For an instant he thought not. Then he caught sight of a tall dark figure standing a little back from the doorway. "There he is," spoke Sanderson, "why, I'd know that long overcoat of Morgan's if I saw it in Egypt. I don't believe there's another like it in the Industrial City. Everything is O. K., and here is the money."

Passing out into the entrance room he handed the wallet toward the figure and it was promptly received. The attorney failing to follow instructions said as he passed out of the outer door "Now, stick to your promise and we'll double it." "Sure," was the reply, and Sanderson chuckled as he recognized the clear tones of Morgan's voice and thought what a dead cinch he had on the game, as he hurried back to his carriage and away to the depot where he soon settled down in a comfortable Pullman palace car for his long ride.

The next day the long looked for fight over the primary election bill came on in all its fury. Long and loud the battle lasted. Logic profound and eloquence sublime were meted out upon the inoffensive and unsuspecting members in units of an hour in length. The state political machine was fighting on one extreme against the designing political papers on the other, and each side of the controversy was as radical and uncompromising as its opponent. Excitement ran high and the galleries were filled to overflowing. The House had resolved itself into a committee of the whole for the special order, and long and continued work was weighing upon the members for it was getting late in the afternoon. The committee rose and reported to the House the result of its deliberations.

Now was the opportune moment. The members were all tired and wearied by much attention to the deliberations of the committee. Representative Bates arose, addressed the speaker, and being recognized, moved to take from the table the bill he had requested to have laid on the table on the previous day involving the amendment to the charter of the Industrial City. A few of the members started with attention, but as the clerk read the title, they

exclaimed, "Oh, it's some little bill of purely local character Bates is interested in," and then they settled down in apparent semi-conscious inattention.

When the bill was properly before the House, Bates moved that the rules be suspended and the bill placed on its immediate passage.

Morgan had ventured from his seat after the committee of the whole had risen and was not aware of the proceedings, but he returned just in time to hear Bates' motion. He hurried to his desk; and ascertaining what measure was before the House, he addressed the speaker with the statement that he wished to offer an amendment and then began to write a referendum clause to add to the bill. Bates had been afraid of that, and in anticipation he had prepared a referendum clause which he offered in amendment to the bill, thus rendering unnecessary Morgan's amendment and throwing the whole credit of the amendment to Bates. Morgan had no knowledge of the true purpose of the bill and was only requiring the precautionary referendum because of his suspicions that the bill was uncalled for; but after the referendum clause was attached, he raised no

further objection and the bill was passed without further opposition.

The next day's issue of the Industrial City Record said:

"Representative Bates took from the table today the bill which he introduced by request yesterday to authorize the board of public works of the Industrial City to lease franchises. The purpose of the bill is to give the authority to lease the franchise of water mains from Lake Michigan to the Industrial City, providing such a water supply system shall be constructed. Mr. Bates, for the protection of the people, attached a referendum clause to the bill as an amendment; and if the bill shall pass, the people of the Industrial City will be given an opportunity to vote on it."

Sanderson returned from Chicago the same day this article appeared in the Record with $50,000 in his pocket which certain Omaha parties had deposited in a safety deposit vault in Chicago, which was to be paid over as soon as the $4,000,000 contract for putting in a water works system at the Industrial City had been made secure.

The fifty thousand dollars had been produced to be held in escrow until the contract was

secured, and Sanderson had, some weeks before, rented a safety deposit box at Chicago, and the money was placed in the box with the understanding that the Omaha parties were to hold the key until the contract was secured, or as stated until the "goods" were delivered.

Sanderson by some method secured another key, acquired access to the vault, and brought the money back with him to save an extra trip to Chicago, because he was that certain that the bill would pass through the legislature and he had the affairs in the Industrial City all fixed up to turn out just as he wanted them. He reasoned that the work would be finished in a day or two, any way, and then he would have to return to Chicago for the money, and he believed that if he took the money then the Omaha parties would never miss it until everything was fixed up according to the deal.

Oh, if things would only work as we calculate always what a lot of trouble it would save.

One of the Omaha parties the next day saw a copy of one of the Chicago papers containing a statement of the fact that a referendum clause had been attached to the charter bill. This had disarranged the plans agreed upon,

so he went to the vault, opened the strong box to get his money back, and found the fifty thousand dollars gone.

Imagine the alarm that would naturally be pictured upon a man's face when he suddenly discovered the fact that he had been fleeced out of fifty thousand dollars. This party was alarmed. He did not know just what was best to do. He was satisfied who had taken the money because Sanderson was the only party outside of the Omaha people that knew of the contents of the vault, but he dared not get after Sanderson too hard for fear that he could not, in that event, get any of the money back; but after failing to find Sanderson or get any clue to the whereabouts of the money, he made complaint to the state's attorney, and upon his testimony together with that of others the grand jury issued an indictment for larceny.

These were stirring times. Thousands of people were eagerly watching and listening to learn something new about the deal. The next issue of the Industrial City Record came out containing the following telegram:

"Chicago, Ill., Feb.,—, 190—. An indictment was today voted by the grand jury against O. P. Sanderson charging him with the larceny

of $50,000. The charge upon which the indictment was voted was given to the grand jury by three Omaha parties, said to be some of the wealthiest residents of that city. After the indictment was found, papers were prepared to secure the extradition of Sanderson and bring him to Illinios. The evidence in the case was kept secret and the state's attorney's office refused to divulge any portion of it. It is officially alleged that the larceny is the outcome of a water supply contract involving $4,000,000. It is said that the Omaha parties came to Chicago bringing $50,000 as earnest money in the deal. The amount was entirely in currency and was deposited in a safety deposit vault. It is said that the only witnesses of the act of placing the money in the vault were the three men who testified in the case today and Sanderson. A couple of days ago one of the Omaha parties went to the vault and found that the money had been taken away. Just when it was carried off is not known.

None of the men interested in the case would talk about it today."

A perfect pandemonium ensued in the official circles of the Industrial City. Sanderson was kept busy every minute denying telegrams

and telephone messages. His office was crowded with friends who were loth to believe the charges brought against him, and when he was not denying the whole scheme, he was cursing his misfortune and wailing inwardly and visiting curses upon Morgan to whom he gave the credit of the referendum and his consequential downfall.

To a reporter he stated. "I do not know these Omaha parties, never heard of the Great Belt Company, have never had any business or other dealings with any of the parties named, and this case does not in any way relate to me. I cannot understand how my name could have been connected with any such transactions."

Time went on, interest ran high, extra editions of daily papers were published daily and almost hourly through the country, but the poor mistaken city attorney, in despair, steadfastly denied his connection with the Chicago matter in any way.

XXV.

IMPLICATION OF MORGAN.

STEADILY the chain of evidence grew more and more perfect and wound itself about its victim. Sanderson saw the condition and realized that by denying constantly he was only placing himself in a more untenable position. He had already assumed a position from which it was inconsistent with honor for him to retract. Every hour increased the difficulty, and he set about it to accumulate the fifty thousand dollars which he had contributed among his co-conspirators and started for Chicago.

Hardly had the echoes of the first outbreak died away when the Chicago papers came out with a half column of headlines as follows:

"RETURN SWAG!—Attorney Sanderson the Man Wanted—Took It "By Mistake"—It Was to Be Part of a Monster Boodling Fund—Grease for City Water Works Scheme—Referendum Clause Made Projectors Want Their Money Back—Sanderson Alleges He Took the Money

to Show City Officials That the Promoters Were Financially Responsible."

"Chicago, Feb., ——— Two detectives from the Martin White Agency arrived in Chicago at 10 o'clock tonight in company with O. P. Sanderson, city attorney of the Industrial City.

Detective Billy Turner carried in his inside pocket $50,000 in currency which was taken from a safety deposit vault in the Illinois Trust and Savings Bank by Mr. Sanderson several days ago."

"This is the money the Omaha millionaire contractor complained to the grand jury last week of losing. An indictment charging Mr. Sanderson with the theft of the money was voted. The Industrial City official returned the money to the detective and came to Chicago to settle with the Omaha parties."

"The $50,000 is said to be part of a $125,000 fund that was to have been paid to public officials for securing a $4,000,000 contract for putting in a water system at the Industrial City.

"The officers in charge of the case say Sanderson came to Chicago to close the deal. Fifty thousand dollars in currency was pro-

duced to be held in escrow until the contract was secured.

"Sanderson rented a safety deposit box and the $50,000 was placed in the box, they say, with the understanding that the Omaha parties were to hold the key until the "goods" were delivered. The detectives say that when Sanderson locked up the box he switched the big roll of currency and put a roll of paper in its place."

"The Omaha parties learned that Representative Bates had introduced a bill in the state legislature for a referendum vote on the Industrial City water works improvement, which move disarranged the plans agreed upon, whereupon the Omaha parties opened the strong box to get their money back and found the $50,000 gone. Having failed in an attempt to secure the return of the money, Sanderson was indicted but not arrested."

"The fifty thousand dollars having been returned, it is said that all persons concerned now desire to drop the matter."

"It is true the $50,000 is again in the hands of the Omaha contractors, but a sensation is in prospect which may mean serious results for some of the Industrial City officials."

The city attorney returned from Chicago as brazen as the serpent of Moses. He had locked up the avenue from which all knowledge of the scheme had hitherto escaped and was openly defiant. But alas! Too much was already out to permit the further success of the scheme. The failure of the charter amendment bill and the Omaha exposure called that deal off. The Milwaukee projectors held up their hands in horror; the New York parties gave it up as a bad job; and the promoters of the Hydraulic Company exercised their energy in the hustle to get under cover.

Sanderson remarked to Hastings, "All's well that ends well" and declared, "The only penalty was defeat. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. I'm ahead of the board and haven't lost anything either."

But alas! Hardly had the boastful words escaped his lips when the United States marshal put in his appearance and arrested them both for trespass upon the United States banking laws in connection with the shortage created and carried under cover for so long a time at the Industrial City Savings Bank.

The officers had held Hastings in suspicion ever since the day the shortage was so nearly

discovered and so timely covered with the cash, but not until after he had quit the employment of the bank were they able to detect the slightest discrepancy. And then the facts were discovered only through the services of experts who were employed to go through the books. But the chain of evidence was most perfect. The facts awaited only to be stated and the proofs were abundant. The two unfortunates were broken in spirit when arraigned and stood mute. A plea of not guilty was entered for them at first, but later, acting on the advice of their attorneys, they changed their plea to guilty and the time to receive sentence was set for a day some time later.

A matter of prospect had become a reality. The ex-cashier laughed and cried and in his fits of feeling was no less fickle than he had been in character. The broad features of the attorney were sullen and sour while his heavy, sternly drawn eyebrows fairly quivered in their efforts to look their worst, and it was a sight to see the strong man wreaking in despair, sighing and sobbing and striking the table of his private office in emphasis, as he belched forth volumes of profanity, and heaped a multitude of curses upon the unsuspecting Morgan because of the

referendum clause attached to the charter amendment bill through Morgan's supposed unfaithfulness.

Hardly had the arraignment of the two men passed into history when extra issues of the daily papers were sold through the streets heralding the news that a grand jury had been called to investigate the evidences of conspiracy. This was like heaping coals of fire upon the heads of the unlucky fellows. Hastings, cowardly as ever, resorted to his revolver and was only persuaded from his rashness by the pleadings of a loving wife. As for Sanderson, the nerves of the strong man were badly shattered. Strong in aggressiveness, he was weak in defense. Though he isolated himself as much as convenient, sympathetic and curious eyes penetrated his solitude. But exhibiting his characteristic determination, vengeance developed in his heart, and he began to consider how he could get even with his persecutors and those who were to blame for the failure of his scheme.

Sentence was deferred from time to time for the purpose of keeping the two men in readiness to testify before the grand jury. Sanderson brooded over his trouble and resolved not to permit his accessories to enjoy

their liberty and honor while he paid the penalty. He, therefore, made calculations to go before the grand jury and disclose the whole deal by confession and implicate all those who had been connected with the infamous scheme. Especially consoling was the thought of wreaking out a vengeance upon the despised Morgan.

Harvey B. Morgan began the session of the legislature in a much more conservative manner than did Mr. Bates, but from the first day his affable disposition and pleasant bearing made him popular. He was ever ready to give due consideration to any measure however trifling it might appear to be. He was ever prompt to espouse a principle, never loath to take a stand, never wavered from his principle until convinced of his error, and soon showed himself the peer of any man on the floor of the House in public debate.

In addition to all these, Morgan was endowed with unusual musical talents, and enjoyed the distinction of possessing a very pleasant voice. He had long been a leading vocalist in his home city, and the people of the capital city were not slow to learn of his accomplishments in this line. He soon found

himself in demand whenever occasion brought about the want of musical entertainment.

Attention is called to one morning about the opening of the second week in April. The frost had left the ground when the early spring rain came; the grass was already making the lawns green; and the huge buds on the maples that line the capitol grounds were about ready to spread out into leaves. Smiling tulips, nurtured by the gardener's gentle care, brightened the little flower beds along the capitol walk, and the robins were already flashing their red breasts from tree to tree. But the little old buildings across the corner looked as ugly as they had in January, and the old war-governor from his pedestal looked down the length of Michigan Avenue as sternly as he dared.

An old gentleman with long flowing beard and his shoulders stooping considerably, carrying an umbrella and a satchel which, judging from the style of its make-up, must have seen twenty-five years of service, and an old lady wearing the bonnet she had made over each season in order to appear respectable at the various religious services in the little church at Wayfield were standing in awe beholding the

marvelous scenery that decorated the capitol grounds, and were reading the histories of the relic cannons on the lawn.

Sure enough! It was Uncle Reuben Haynes and his wife, Aunt Lydia. Before the rush of spring's work had commenced on the farm, they had come to the capital city to spend a few days with the nephew they had recognized as their only boy and of whom they were very proud.

They had come a day earlier than Morgan expected them and he had not seen them, but he very soon appeared and took them in charge. They were freed from their luggage and after a rest were shown throughout the capitol building—through all the departments, the museum, and the state library. Aunt Lydia was content to remain at the landing at the foot of the dome, but Uncle Reuben was supple enough to go clear to the highest possible point, and he enjoyed the novelty as much as one thirty years his junior. They visited all the points of interest in the city; and after the day's session was over, they enjoyed what was in those days a very unusual treat—a flying trip out to the state farm in one of the popular automobiles manufactured by the Olds-Mobile Manufactur-

ing Company. It was most exhilarating, and the red blood brought a ruddy flush to Uncle Reuben's wrinkled features as he alighted after their return to the city for dinner.

"Who'd ever thought fifty years ago," said he to Aunt Lydia when they were left alone for a few minutes," that we'd ever live to ride in a buggy with nothin' hitched to it. Gol! You and I was glad to get a ride after a good yoke of oxen in them days."

"Yes, Reuben, but we had a yoke of oxen that was hard to beat."

"You bet we did, Lydia, but I had to beat 'em a good deal to get 'em along. You remember how everybody looked at us the first time we went out for a ride and called over to Squire Blake's at Bradley, when we went through woods purty much all the way? These infernal go-devils they have now-a-days wouldn't been in it bumpin' over the logs and dodgin' stumps, would they? Teams was teams those days."

"Give me them days though, Reuben, every time. I'd like to be right back there again if we were as strong and lighthearted as we were then."

"Yes, I guess you're right, Lydia, but we go this way but once," and Uncle Reuben choked

a little as he thought of it, for the memory of happy days long passed away ofttimes brings a feeling of sadness and lonesomeness because of the scenes we can never behold again, and half musing, he repeated the little verse:

"Tis true life's shores are shifting
Every Year,
And we are seaward drifting
Every Year,
Old places changing fret us.
The living more forget us.
There are fewer to regret us
Every Year."

At the dining hour Morgan and his uncle had a very pleasant conversation. It happened that they were at a small table at one end of the dining hall; and fortunately, they were free to talk undisturbed by listeners.

"Well! well!" said Uncle Reuben, after they were properly waited upon and were proceeding to enjoy the delicacies that Morgan had ordered for them," I shall have to change my opinion of long standing as to the character and make up of the legislature."

"Why so, Uncle Reuben?"

"Well, you know, I haven't been further from home than up to the Industrial City since I got through marchin' with Grant at Appomattox and came home to Wayfield, and durin' all the intervenin' years that have passed, about all I knew about such places is what I've seen

in the paper. Now, in the paper they picture farmer 'Corntassle' with his oil-cloth hand-bag and dilapidated umbrella startin' off to the capital city. They tell about the members ridin' on passes and how much dishonesty there is votin' for the corporations and passin' 'ripper' bills and so forth. In fact, you'd think from their tellin' that the legislature was a pack of hoodoos and scoundrels; but when I come down here and look around for myself, I find a very different state of affairs."

"Yes, you're right in your conclusion, uncle. The man who depends entirely upon the newspapers for his information is to be pitied. As a whole the present legislature is made up of a fine lot of fellows. Of course, it is nothing more than we could expect that the politics of a great state like ours will be represented in accordance with the character of the politics, and we can't expect men to be gathered together from all over the state, representing the various elements that make up the political field, without having a few bums mixed in. We have them here now much to the discredit of the people of the state, but they ought not to be permitted by their presence to blemish the whole body. You know, when you ride

along in the country and see a flock of sheep with a few black sheep in it, you will remember that flock in distinction from all others, and the tendency will be to permit the black sheep to lend color to the whole flock. So it is in the case of the legislature. I'll have to admit, uncle, that there are a few fellows here that are but little better than bums, but I don't think the rest of the House or Senate ought to be classified with them. The newspapers are always ready to criticise and shout 'graft,' but they're the biggest whelps in that line that there are. They'll never say a good thing about a fellow unless they get paid for it, and on the contrary they always stand ready to take a fall out of the other fellow at the first opportunity, even to the extent of creating cynicism, anarchism and disturbance. They are doing the thinking and furnishing the brains for a large per cent. of the people, and when they get their heads together and create sentiment for or against a man, or a bill, or any other thing, you might just as well climb into the band wagon. You'll be run over and thrown aside if you don't, and no one is able to vouch as to what the motive is that prompts their methods.

"Now, they call this a 'rotten legislature' because we passed a few 'ripper' bills of a local character pertaining to the city of Bay and the metropolis. The facts are, the people in those cities elected men to come here and represent them. They came and unanimously asked for this legislation. It is the nearest we can come to home rule for cities to grant them what they ask. We granted it, and they call us 'rotten.' A man came up from Ashtenaw county and asked for the division of the judicial circuit. We decided that it was no more than right and granted his request. He went back home and told a personal friend of mine the legislature was 'rotten.' That was as definite as he could get it. Such fellows are never specific in their charges. They are either too ignorant, too dishonest, or positively irresponsible. If what they say is true, they should be specific; if what they say is not true, they ought to be hanged for poisoning the minds of the public against the institutions of our government."

"Well, say! I never thought of it in just that way, but it's just as true as can be, Harvey. A truthful newspaper is a blessin', but a dishonest paper is a curse. That's so!"

A long and desultory conversation ensued touching politics, farming, and even religion; but at last, the meal, which was greatly prolonged by the conversation, was brought to a close.

"Now," said Morgan, "Uncle Reuben, I have been invited to spend the evening at a place called Assembly hall. It's not in the capitol building, but it a very fine hall with parlors connected and is located on a main street but a few blocks from here. Senator Hastings' daughter has been spending the greater portion of the winter in the capital city, but she is going away soon and gives a farewell reception at Assembly hall tonight. She has invited me to be present and render a few vocal selections. After a short program, which is a rather peculiar diversion from the usual plan, there will be fine instrumental music in attendance and those who are desirous of indulging may 'trip the light fantastic.' I understand that it would be a little unusual sight for you, but you have heard of fashionable balls and I would like to have you accompany me. If you don't like the sight, you can listen to the music. We'll not stay late. Now come, Aunt Lydia. You'll not

be sorry and we can come away whenever you choose."

"It doesn't make any difference to me if Reuben wants to go," replied Aunt Lydia.

"Waal," said Uncle Reuben, "I guess we might as well see everything while we're here. I don't think there'll be any temptation attendin' it, and I'm sure we'll enjoy the music."

At the proper hour Morgan and his old friends made their way to Assembly hall. Morgan had made previous arrangements for the attendance of the old couple, and had made it a condition of his own attendance. Very desirable seats were secured in one of the parlors, comfortably near to the music, where they could see nearly all that took place and still be by themselves, and where they were able to carry on a conversation without interruption.

It was a most unusual sight for them and their eyes were busy every moment. Aunt Lydia, after the manner of her kind, was noticing particularly the beautiful dresses and elegant jewelry that was so persistently displayed. Some of the dresses were cut too low at the top to suit her, and the "unsightly humps of hair"

on the heads of some of the ladies were "simply awful."

The short program was rendered very entertainingly, and especially happy was the twinkle in Uncle Reuben's eye as he nodded to Aunt Lydia when Morgan rounded out his melodious voice, rendering his favorite solo.

But soon the program was over, and then the hall was filled with merry voices in happy salutation of the many friends therein gathered. Gentlemen and ladies were hastening to and fro, mingling with the merry crowds and writing on little cards which they carried and called "programs," and the two elderly people were no less interested than the rest.

Suddenly the orchestra struck up a lively air; and almost simultaneously, the whole crowd went reeling off upon the floor and a hundred nimble feet moved in exact time with the popular two-step. It was a delightful sight. So many beautiful ladies, and so many graceful and gentlemanly young men, each striving to acquit himself in behavior as well as possible.

Not a word escaped either of the old people for a long time. They watched every movement, and Uncle Reuben wore a pleased expression as he noticed Morgan go whirling down the

hall to the step of the beautiful waltz. His graceful appearance immediately attracted the attention of his admiring uncle and aunt. But the glamour of the occasion had begun to wear off so far as Aunt Lydia was concerned. Turning to her companion she said:

"Reuben, we ought not to be here. I'm sorry we come."

"Why so, Lydia?"

"Why, this is nothing but a dance."

"Yes, that's very true, and lookin' at it in that way, it's not to be wondered at that you think so for you've been taught all through life that it is wicked to dance. You and I used to dance though, Lydia, and I guess our chances are just as good for heaven as some other folkses.' "

"Why, Reuben Haynes, do you mean to tell me that it ain't wicked to dance?"

"No; not exactly so. I did not intend to be so general as that. I don't think that a little healthful dancing now and then as an exercise is sufficient to condemn anybody, but of course it should not be carried to an extreme. Intemperance in any line is wicked. If a young person went to dancing parties night after night

and wasted vitality and got to lovin' such things too much it would be wicked. I have read the Bible from Genesis to Revelations but I can't remember any place where it says it's wicked to dance. But it stands to reason, if a fellow wasted his time and money and energy and developed naught but a love for such things it is wicked, and God has provided that one will suffer for such doin's in various ways even be fore we leave this world. I don't think it's wicked to play a game of checkers, but it's just as wicked as it is to play a game of pedro, or high-low-jack-and-the-game. I don't think it is wicked to indulge in any such games as a pastime for a little restful recreation. but if a man played hour after hour and day after day, it would be slothful and wicked. The wickedness in dancin' doesn't consist in the dancin' but rather in other evils that may attend its practice if the heart of the dancer is so inclined. If your heart is right, Lydia, I think you could dance a little just as you sing a little and I don't think one would do any more harm than the other. But, of course, I do not argue that we ought to dance. I am just simply arguin' that we should be temperate in all things."

"See that woman with that low-necked dress on, Reuben, is that temperance or intemperance?"

"Waal! you've got me there, Lydia, 'cause I don't know just where to draw the line in that case."

Just at this juncture Morgan went whirling by down across the hall, stepping a lively two-step with the hostess, Miss Hastings. They were graceful dancers, and all eyes were turned toward them in admiration.

The weather was mild and the windows were open to let in the refreshing air of spring-time. No breeze was stirring and all without was quiet as could be. The first half of the dancing number was over. The music stopped for a brief rest. For an instant all was quiet.

Suddenly out on the streets there arose a din of voices. It was a posse of newsboys and they were shouting, announcing for sale extra issues of the Daily Journal. Listen! What did they say?

"All about the grand jury. Fourteen more warrants in the water deal. Bates and Morgan on the list."

What a commotion followed! Morgan was taken down so completely, he acted fairly

bewildered. The music started again but there were no dancers to grace the floor. Hopeful that there must be some mistake, no less than a dozen newspapers were in the hall inside of two minutes, and the hitherto gay crowd was gathered in knots, reading the fatal news.

Pleasure had changed to sadness. Not a happy face adorned the room. Nearly every one in the room, being friends of Morgan, gathered about the unfortunate one and wanted to know how it happened. But friend and foe are much alike when a man gets into trouble. It is the same old story. "Laugh and the world laughs with you, weep and you weep alone." Morgan's friends were many when he was singing and dancing; but when he, with his uncle and aunt passed out into the night with aching hearts and troubled countenances, all went back to their pleasures, for truly:

> "The gay will laugh
> When thou art gone, the solemn brood of care
> Plod on, and each one as before will chase
> His favorite phantom."

The unfortunate representative was duly arraigned together with the other accused parties, pleaded not guilty, waived examination, and was bound over to the higher court for trial. Meanwhile, extra issues of various periodicals were

published and sold on nearly every street in the civilized world. Even it is said that in the far distant country of South Africa such interest was manifested in their disclosures that it was necessary to satisfy the curious public by extra issues of the Boer papers, and in the meanwhile, public sentiment was crystallizing. Of course they were guilty or the matter would not have come out; but while the gods of fate were working, the wheels of time rolled on.

XXVI.

THE TRIAL OF MORGAN.

NOTHING comes slower than a time long wished for. Nothing comes quicker than the unwelcomed event. So it seems to the anxious soul. But, nevertheless, time rolls on with the same measured tread; and whether welcomed or dreaded, nothing is so certain as its flight.

So the date for Morgan's trial came round. The court room was filled to overflowing. It seemed that every available space was occupied. The large entrance doors were swung ajar, and clear out into the hall the crowds were standing, gazing, and listening. Many were even permitted to come within the bar of the court room to listen to the proceedings until it seemed as if not another soul could get inside.

The learned judge sat in his place as dignified as emergency required, and by the expression of his countenance exhibited the responsibility which he undoubtedly felt. A half dozen reporters were gathered conveniently near eager to catch every word that might add

to the sensation. The jury box was filled with as fair a looking jury as is usually obtained. All was in readiness for the production of evidence and the bailiff rapped for order.

The prosecuting attorney arose to outline the case to the jury in his opening statement. Save the sound of his voice, the court room was as quiet as the tomb. The expression upon the faces of those present manifested the most intense interest in the matter at hand. Morgan was the target for many a curious glance, and the fact that seven or eight aldermen had pleaded guilty but a day or two before to complicity in the water deal, prompted many expressions that "of course he's guilty or he wouldn't be mixed up in the case."

It is an old and true saying, "Show me a man without enemies and I'll show you a man without following." Morgan had his enemies, and in so much as his stand had always been radical, his enemies were accordingly extreme and his following correspondingly close.

On a seat conveniently near sat one of the contesting candidates for the legislature who had been defeated in the convention that nominated Morgan. On the same seat and next to the ex-candidate sat an intimate and ardent

friend of Morgan's. The friend once dropped a word about Morgan not being guilty. "Guilty!" exclaimed the ex-candidate, "Of course, he's guilty."

"He's not guilty, and he'll prove his innocence, too," replied the friend emphatically.

"But you haven't got anything to bet on it, have you?" queried the ex-candidate expecting to cower his assailant.

"Yes, I have," came the quick response. "I'll cover anything you can stake on it."

The ex-candidate, still thinking that he would make the other fellow back down and out, drew out his wallet and counted out a hundred dollars in bills, bright, new and crisp and placed them in the hands of a mutual friend as stake-holder. Then he began to josh the other fellow, but he did not scare him any for the fellow pulled out a wallet equally laden and counted out a like sum and placed the same in the hands of the stake-holder. Now the bluff had come to an end and judging from the paleness of the ex-candidate it was easy enough to see who was the most frightened. But sympathy was with the ex-candidate and a number who were near were encouraging him to stick to his proposition when the disturbance

became too noticeble and the bailiff rapped for order.

O. P. Sanderson was sworn on the part of the people and proceeded to give in his testimony. Everything was again quiet. The court room in the third story of the city hall was up away from the noise of the street and not a sound disturbed the proceedings.

Brazen-faced and determined as ever, the conspirator related the story of the water deal as complacently as if it had been a game of ball. He was permitted to go into detail and related it the same as he had before the grand jury. He told about the shortage at the bank; how the same had been created; how the first proposition of the water deal had been made and entered into; how the plans had developed; and how the money had been received, the short age paid up and the council bribed. He told all about the various deals that had sprung into prospects; how it became necessary to amend the city charter; how the proposed amendment had received opposition at the hands of Morgan; how they had planned to buy Morgan off; how the plans had succeeded; and how he had gone in his own person to the capital city with the big wallet filled with bills to the extent of five

thousand dollars and met this same Morgan, the prisoner at the bar, by appointment in the south anteroom of the capitol and delivered to him personally the wallet with the money therein contained.

The story had its effects. All eyes turned toward Morgan. Even the members of the jury were seen to cast pitying glances at the unfortunate representative, who was already condemned so far as public opinion was concerned. The ex-candidate gave the friend a searching look and a nod with the challenge, "What do you think of it, now?" The friend winced and shook his head.

Morgan was the most composed man in the court room. He had listened to the conspirator's story with an interest no less intense than that manifested by the crowd at large; but paying steady attention, his eyes scarcely left the occupant of the witness chair, and the expression of his face was one of the most calm and undisturbed.

The cross-examination of the witness, though long drawn out and involving every detail, proved of little avail. The city attorney stuck to what he verily believed to be the truth, was very confident in the manner of his ex-

pression, and his story had its weight with the jury.

Then followed the testimony of Hastings. He had studied his story well. Not a word or a thought was left out, or inserted in the wrong place. His testimony corroborated that given by Sanderson and filled in the little niches left by the attorney's testimony as perfectly as the tenons fill the indentures of a dovetail joint. Slowly, but positively, they were weaving a network of evidence about the prisoner.

Hastings told about the plans that were entered into to secure the passage of the charter amendment bill; how he had been delegated the work of bribing the members of the legislature; how he had gone to the capital city with that work in view; how he had met the prisoner in the legislature; how he had secured him upon consideration of the payment of five thousand dollars; and how the prisoner had been so particular and careful about the matter requiring the money to be paid to him in an unusual place. He told how he communicated the information to the city attorney, and how he had secreted himself in the ante-room and watched the unfortunate representative receive the money from the hands of the city attorney.

Morgan scarcely looked from the witness. He was perfectly astounded. His face gave unmistakable evidence of grief and horror. He had dropped his countenance and rested his head on the palm of his hand. Uncle Reuben and Aunt Lydia sat near him. Uncle Reuben was still positive and confident, but Aunt Lydia was sorrowful and frequently wiped away a tear.

Then came the notorious Bates to the witness chair. All wondered what he could say to add to the proof of Morgan's guilt. Even the friend that bet the hundred dollars with the ex-candidate shook his head, indulged in a little profanity, and declared that, "It looked like a hopeless case."

"But," he continued, "I'll stick to the bet if I lose, for I don't believe that Harvey is guilty."

Bates was sworn and went on to tell how he had been approached by Morgan, and asked to introduce the bill in the first place; how Morgan had requested him to have it laid on the table until the members would become better acquainted with its provisions; how he had complied with the request which appeared so reasonable; how he had taken it from the table at the request of the prisoner; and that

his suspicions were aroused at that time by the nervous, excited bearing of Morgan which had prompted him to attach the referendum clause that had saved the city so much, etc.

At length the testimony of the prosecution on the part of the people was all in. Though it has taken but a short time to tell it here, the court had consumed several days in direct, cross and re-direct examinations. Still the court room was filled to overflowing, interest ran high, and conviction seemed a foregone conclusion.

And so the trial progressed. Many there were in the court room who had been present at the convention when Morgan was nominated for the legislature and all those had learned to admire him for his ability, candor and apparent honesty of purpose. But now, what a change had taken place in the tide of affairs! What a contrast in these two great events in his life! Morgan saw all this and shrugged his shoulders as the thought came home to his mind of the former, his Austerlitz, and the latter, apparently sure to prove his Waterloo.

Andy Ferguson arose to make the opening statement for the defense. Justice to old friends requires the disclosure of the fact that he had been retained as one of the attorneys for the

defense, partly because of Uncle Reuben's wishes, partly because of his own desire to fight for the schoolmate of former years, and more especially because of his marked ability as a practitioner, although his opportunities and interests had directed his attention more especially to corporation law. He had come all the way from Pittsburg to fight for the friend that had saved him many thrashings at the hands of disagreeable schoolmates when he was a little boy, and his wife, she that was Arletta Maier, came with him and was present every moment of the trial.

How often it is that the boy that is the butt of so many mean jeers—always being picked upon by his thoughtless companions and always being abused and run over by those who are a little more forward in physical activity—becomes the best, the ablest and the most useful man. Just such a man was Andy Ferguson. Ungainly, tall of stature and extremely awkward in his movements, he was far from being prepossessing to say the least. But he had a keen and subtle mind; his command of language was simply remarkable; he possessed a profound knowledge of the law; and he entered into the trial of the case with a spirit of earnestness that

left no opportunity for one to doubt his honesty of purpose.

With the aid of the attorney of counsel he made a magnificent effort to acquit the unlucky Morgan; but in spite of everything that could be said or done, the defense was extremely weak, while the prosecution in point of evidence was unusually strong. There was no affirmative evidence to be put in by the defense at all. On the contrary the whole plan of defense was a flat denial with, in fact, the corroborative testimony in favor of the prisoner's guilt.

At last the evidence was all in. The defense announced to the court that they were ready to rest their case. Then followed the convincing argument of the prosecuting attorney to the jury, followed in turn by the arguments for the defense which though eloquent and forceful were not bolstered up with evidence sufficiently strong to be convincing.

Every friend of Morgan's present wore a crestfallen and disappointed look; many a curious eye watched his appearance as his languishing hopes grew darker; and Morgan himself was hardly able to keep up courage.

Then came the judge's charge to the jury. Dignified as the typical American jurist he rounded out his sentences with emphasis and precision, while the jury and all others present afforded the strictest attention. Scarcely had he uttered a single sentence when it became evident that the jury could not comply with the charge of the court without bringing in a verdict of guilty. Straightway the audience began to leave one by one. The reporter for the Evening Courier telephoned in to the head office and in a few moments extra papers were being sold throughout the streets. The betting men met in the corridors, and the ex-candidate asked the other fellow what he thought then.

I'm ready to call the bet off, now," replied the other fellow seriously.

"Not by a ——— sight," replied the ex-candidate, as he passed on.

Morgan was fairly overcome. The stern countenance of the court showed no sympathy there; the short, terse sentences spoke naught but conviction to the jury; and the quick, sly glances from the jury box spoke volumes to the accused man.

The trial had lasted nearly a week; the court had talked to the jury nearly a half hour;

the audience had gone forth one by one to tell the news; extra papers were spreading the worst throughout the streets; Andy Ferguson and his counsellors were looking worried and forlorn; Aunt Lydia was shaking with sobs; Uncle Reuben with his fallen countenance had buried his face in his hands and his lips were moving in prayer; and it was Morgan's turn to give up in despair, but still the court went on sealing his doom.

With his back to the door, his elbows upon the table before him, and his face in the palms of his hands, he did not see the stranger who came hurriedly in to Andy Ferguson's chair and spoke to him in a hurried manner.

Suddenly the attorney sprang to his feet and asked permission of the court to interrupt. Being granted permission so to do, he said:

"Your Honor; just at this moment there appears in court a man who claims to have important testimony to render in behalf of the defense to this cause. It may be a little irregular, perhaps, and certainly very unusual, but I ask in the interest of justice that the defense be re-opened and this man be allowed to testify. He states that he would have been

"He did not see the stranger who came in."—*Page 300.*

here earlier in the trial, but was unfortunately held away by a wreck on the Pan Handle."

"Thank God!" shouted Uncle Reuben, and down came the bailiff's gavel with a whack, while in the hearts of many echoed an enthusiastic "amen."

"What is your name, sir?" demanded the court with a scowl over his spectacles at the stranger.

"Adrian Schofield."

"What is your business?" continued the judge.

"I am a United States government detective, sir," replied the stranger.

The judge was not very friendly to the interruption of a case so nearly ended and, directing his gaze toward the prosecutor, hesitated. Thinking that perhaps it was his turn to speak, the attorney arose to his feet and said:

"Your honor, while I have not the slightest doubt as to the prisoner's guilt, it would be the farthest from my desire to send an innocent man to punishment; and if this man is able to show us that he knows anything that is important evidence in this case, and will show

us how he knows it, I am satisfied to waive whatever objection we might raise to the introduction of his testimony at this time. I demand, however, that the fellow show first of all how he knows what he testifies to."

"Swear the witness," said the court removing his glasses and curiously regarding the newcomer as he took the oath and advanced to the witness chair.

XXVII.

THE PROBLEM UNFOLDS.

A GREAT change had been wrought. Languishing hopes had suddenly given way to eager expectations. The word was passed down through the corridors of the city hall, and the court room was filled to overflowing quicker than it had been emptied. All eyes were turned upon the detective, the sensational character of the moment. In the excitement of the hour, no one noticed the look of concern that be-clouded Hastings' features, and no one took notice of the searching stare that Sanderson directed toward the ex-cashier as he began to suspicion for the first time that he did not know all.

Representative Bates reached for his hat and was about to leave the room, but the prosecuting attorney discovered the move and requested him to remain for the reason that he might be needed a little later.

"Your honor," spoke the detective from the witness chair. "The prosecuting attorney has requested that I tell how I know what I am

about to testify to be the truth. My story is a long one and in order to be understood requires that I should tell it all, and perhaps it involves a great deal of irrelevant matter."

"The court please," interrupted the prosecuting attorney, "in the interest of justice, we are willing to waive objections, in order that a complete and comprehensive story may be related, so far as it is positively within the certain knowledge of the witness and so long as it is not too grossly irrelevant and incompetent. So far as the prosecution is concerned, we waive objection until we see fit to enter objection as the witness discloses his knowledge."

"Proceed with the testimony," ordered the court, and after the usual introductory questions, Ferguson instructed the witness to relate his story to the jury.

By this time there were no vacant seats left in the room and very little standing room was left unoccupied. So eager were the listeners that no one took note of the different persons who had entered and taken a position near as possible to the center of interest. Morgan had brightened in appearance, but scarcely removed his gaze from the witness. Uncle Reuben wore a smile that appeared ready to

break into a sob at any moment; and Aunt Lydia had become so despondent that she lost all apparent interest in the proceedings. Every one but her was so intensely interested in the testimony of the detective that no one looked to see who else were present.

The witness began: "I am by profession a detective, and have been in the employ of the postal department of the United States government, off and on, for the past seventeen years."

Here the witness threw back the lapel of his coat and exhibited his official badge, as he withdrew from his inside coat pocket a certificate bearing the official seal of the postal department of the United States and offered it as an exhibit in the cause.

"In the summer of 1894, I was despatched to look into some alleged postal frauds at a place in an adjoining county, some fifty miles from here. There were numerous petty thefts from the mails and a series of frauds practiced, until a discrepancy of over a thousand dollars was discovered."

"A man by the name of Hoskins was the postmaster at this place, and I repaired hence and began the work of detection assigned to me."

"I found the postmaster an amiable old gentleman and of unquestionable integrity. It took but a few days to satisfy myself as to that, and I then turned my attention to the assistants in the office. I came into the neighborhood in the guise of a cheap laborer, a good-natured, half-witted tramp, and secured employment as chore boy in and about the post master's premises where I had an excellent opportunity to study conditions. Here I remained for some time and secured some valuable information. However, I did not secure sufficient information to warrant any arrest before the suspicions of the postmaster's son were aroused by my interest in affairs generally, and he discharged me. I had, however, learned the lay of the land and remained in the vicinity at work on the case as carefully and eagerly as possible.

"While I was still in the employment of Hoskins and playing the role of a half-wit, I was called upon by young Hoskins to witness a deed of conveyance of a farm to him, executed by one E. W. Halliday whose eyesight was poor and who had supposed he was signing a receipt in connection with some mail matter. I witnessed the same in order to cover my iden-

tity and determined to follow it through to the end, but it was only a few days after that when the old gentleman Halliday shuffled off this mortal coil, and matters were greatly complicated. Of course, the deed had not been acknowledged; but by clever penmanship, young Hoskins had forged an acknowledgment, using the name and imitating the handwriting of a local notary public.

"Eventually, a disagreement came about between Hoskins and his son and the latter left home. I followed him through numerous escapades through the state and into other states. One time in particular, I secreted myself in the schoolhouse near Delton, where Mr. Halliday's daughter was teaching, upon whom he was trying to force attention."

No one can imagine the surprise experienced by some of the people present. Every one, however, was too much interested to notice anything but the evidence, and the witness proceeded.

"I was informed that he had troubled the lady, and I locked myself in the clothes press in the schoolroom. Afterwards young Hoskins came to the schoolroom and assaulted the teacher, after showing her the deed he had

secured by fraud. I was unable to unlock my secret chamber and could not come to the rescue. Another man appeared on the scene and took up her cause, whereupon a fight ensued, and I succeeded in getting out of my prison just in time to save the life of the young man who had appeared in the teacher's defense. In the fracas, Hoskins got away and left his deed, and I submit it here as an exhibit to prove my statement. The prisoner at the bar, your honor, was the rescuer, and that young lady standing in the front row is Miss Halliday."

Here Morgan turned as his attention was directed by the witness and looked squarely into the sympathetic eyes of his former playmate. It was but a short glance and for an instant it pained him to feel that while he was thus accused he was not worthy of her presence.

But long after he had turned away, the tender heart that had shone through her smile of recognition touched him. He felt that it was indeed worth the while to be in trouble a little to find who his friends were. A whole volume would be inadequate space to describe the thoughts and emotions that these two persons experienced at this time. Even the testimony of

the witness was of less interest to him now, but the detective continued:

"I followed Hoskins to Iowa and North Dakota. He secured a job carrying the mail overland between two cities in that western country and I shadowed him nearly all the time he was thus employed. I was unable to secure any clues as to the former frauds but secured his arrest for robbing the mails there. He was taken to the United States district court where a lawyer from Lincoln, Nebraska, handled his defense, assisted by O. P. Sanderson, city attorney of the Industrial City, and Hoskins was acquitted. I afterwards, in company with three other men, watched him dig up his stolen treasure, and I have here the box he had it buried in. He left there and the next I saw of him, he was in the Industrial City.

"He put up at the Barber House and so did I. Some of his western cronies warned him that he was shadowed, and his suspicions were directed toward a young travelling salesman whose habits and salary would not permit him to put up at a better hotel. In conversation with me he expressed his wrath and said he would kill the fellow. The next morning the morning papers came out with a story under the caption,

"Another Case of Blowing Out the Gas," and told about the salesman's death from asphyxiation. I could not secure proof of Hoskins' guilt in this matter and never prosecuted him, but have, within the last twenty-four hours, obtained positive proof which I shall submit to the prosecuting attorney at the earliest possible moment. That man's full name is Joseph Hoskins and he now sits near me. He changed his name immediately after this tragedy and has been known as Joseph Hastings ever since."

This created extreme commotion in the court room and the bailiff was compelled to rap for order. The ex-cashier put on an injured look and Sanderson looked disgusted. The audience was carried away as if by a fairy tale, and the jury looked puzzled. Uncle Reuben was sitting on the edge of his chair in a nervous manner, and Aunt Lydia could not understand. The court looked wise and the prosecuting attorney sprang to his feet.

"Your honor, I object to all this matter being put in to lumber up the records. I can't see where it has anything to do with the guilt or innocence of the prisoner at the bar. It's irrelevant and incompetent."

"The court please," pleaded the witness. "What I have said thus far has been entirely preliminary and explanatory. I have now come to the water deal proposition in connection with the bribery charges preferred against the prisoner."

"The witness will proceed to tell what he knows about the facts concerning the bribery charges against the party now on trial," said the court, and Schofield continued:

"About the time the charter amendment bill came up in the legislature last winter, I was engaged in a little detective work in the capital city. In a moment of leisure one afternoon, I was enjoying a smoke in the stationery room, when Joseph Hoskins came in and asked for a sheet of carbon paper stating that the clerk in committee room 'D' had left his typewriter out but had locked all the stationery in his desk. He was supplied with a new sheet of carbon paper and went to room 'D.' I passed the room a couple of times and saw him operating the typewriter and I saw him come out and mail a letter in a few minutes. I saw the letter after he had mailed it and noticed that he had addressed it to O. P. Sanderson. My suspicions were aroused and knowing his past history, I

was curious to know what he and Sanderson were trying to do. So, thinking perhaps I might find a clue, I went up to room 'D.' There I found the carbon which the fellow had forgotten to remove. I do not know why he wanted a carbon copy of the letter, but the carbon being new, there is the impress of but one message upon it, which is perfectly plain, and I submit it here as another exhibit to show how I got next to the scheme to bribe Morgan."

The carbon was an exact copy of the letter received by Sanderson from Hoskins in reference to the payment of five thousand dollars in small bills at a certain place and time specified, and was read to the jury and duly marked as an exhibit.

The dectective continued: "On the same day, after I had taken it upon myself to look into the matter, I overheard a confidential conversation between Hoskins and Representative Blank in which they disclosed their purpose to deceive Sanderson, and get the five thousand dollars to divide between themselves. They both expressed themselves that Sanderson would send the money, or at least trust them to deliver it to Morgan, and both were confident that Sanderson would never know the difference."

Now it was time for public eyes to be diverted from Morgan. Hastings, alias Hoskins, and Sanderson were the objects of interest. The latter looked desperate, and the former dared not to meet the latter's gaze, but sat with his face turned another way.

"Having the carbon," continued Schofield, "I had a full program of the proceedings to be carried out and determined to see the game through. Representative Blank made arrangements with the chairman of the committee on Revision and Amendments to the Statutes, of which committee Morgan was a member, to have a committee meeting that evening, and had the meeting called at 7:30 p. m. Of course, Morgan was present and his attention was safely engaged for the evening. At the proper moment Hoskins obtained Morgan's coat and hat from the cloak room; and disguised to impersonate Morgan as much as possible, he took his stand in the anteroom as directed in the letter to Sanderson, and Representative Blank had procured a key to the vault under the steps to the south entrance to the capitol building, and was but a few feet from Hoskins' position. Neither party knew, however, that I had secreted myself just inside the door

and was even nearer to Hoskins than was Representative Blank.

"When Sanderson came, Representative Blank jumped through the door and down a few steps, but the door was left ajar. It was intensely dark; but the two men were between me and the dimly lighted hall, and I saw Sanderson hand a wallet to Hoskins, whereupon an instant later Hoskins handed it through the doorway toward Representative Blank who in the darkness did not see the move, and I, instead of the representative, took the wallet from his hand. I here submit it as an exhibit to prove my statement, and it contains five thousand dollars in denominations designated in Hoskins' letter to Sanderson. When the two men discovered this error, I can't say, but they left the room, each one evidently thinking that the other had the wallet. Two minutes later Morgan's coat and hat were back in their accustomed place and I saw Morgan sitting alone reading some proposed legislation and still waiting for the other members of the committee in room 'D.'"

Bates, who had already been indicted for complicity in the deal and was under bonds, got up and left the room. The stern lines of Sanderson's ugly face were drawn to their tightest

tension. He was mad and none knew it better than Hoskins. The latter reasoned, however, that he could make it no better by continuing to falsify, and determined to make a clean breast of the whole affair. Consequently, when he was returned to the witness chair for rebuttal, he admitted the truth of the whole statement of Schofield so far as the charges against Morgan were concerned; and just as he passed Sanderson's chair, returning to his seat, the city attorney sprang at him and hit him a blow that laid him lengthwise on the floor before any one could interfere. The excitement was made to subside as soon as possible. Sanderson was immediately fined for contempt of court, and the foreman of the jury announced that the jury was ready to report without leaving the jury box, whereupon a verdict of acquittal was promptly rendered.

Now came the joyful moments. Aunt Lydia langhed and cried. Uncle Reuben actually shouted. Great tears streamed down Morgan's face as his old friends one by one grasped his hand in congratulations. Andy Ferguson announced to all the friends of Morgan that he had a commission appointing Morgan general attorney for a local division of one of

the Pennsylvania lines at a comfortable salary of thirty-five hundred per year. But Morgan was talking with Maude Halliday. She was explaining how she had been injured in the panic at the theater in Chicago the last time they met, and that she was hastily taken to the hospital with a broken arm, where she was compelled to remain for many days. This was very satisfactory news to Morgan for he feared she had given him the "slip" purposely.

Just then Arletta Ferguson came up and said:

"Say! Maude, Andy owes you and Mr. Morgan an apology."

"Why, Arletta?"

"Well, you remember when Andy and I were living at Wayfield, a few days after our marriage—the time your father died and you had to hurry home so suddenly?"

"Yes, Arletta."

"Well, you wrote a letter to Mr. Morgan and left it with Andy to deliver, and what do you think? I went down to father's yesterday and was packing up some of Andy's old clothes to take back with me to make over into clothes for the boys, and down in the lining of one of

his old coats, I found that letter. Here it is, Mr. Morgan. I hope Andy's carelessness made no difference in your social affairs."

"I assure you, I am glad to get it, Mrs. Ferguson," replied Morgan, and turning to Miss Halliday remarked: "I was very much surprised to learn that it was your troubles I mixed in at Delton that proved so risky on my part. I didn't get a glimpse of your countenance."

"Neither did I recognize you in the excitement of the hour. You hastened away so soon."

"I had but a few moments to catch my train at Delton."

So the conversation was prolonged among the friends until but few remained in the room, and it seemed as if all the past had been explained.

The shades of evening were falling fast when Reuben Haynes and wife, Andy Ferguson and wife, and Harvey Morgan and Maude Halliday took the evening train for Wayfield.

When they arrived at the little town, their childhood home, a buggy was secured for the old people; Ferguson and his wife went their way; and the playmates of former years,

feeling that they understood each other now, walked leisurely home enjoying the evening air, the beautiful moonlight, and the company of each other.

They talked over the years of their separation. They talked of the times of their childhood. They saw again their school friends. In fancy, they romped the fields again. Many were the pleasant memories. But as they came down to Rabbit river neither spoke. They stopped and leaned over the firm railing and watched the moonbeams dancing over the sparkling waters. A new bridge had taken the place of the one so familiar to them, and the change made them sad. A lump was in the throat of each, as they even tried to hum some of the songs they used to sing.

"Harvey, do you remember the time you watched for the chipmunk and whittled a little book out of a block of wood, the same day you tried to see the squirrels that threw acorns at you while you were sleeeping?"

"Yes."

"Well, you gave the book to me, and a girl friend of mine in Chicago who is quite handy in a mechanical line, made it so it will open, painted it in lovely colors, and inscribed upon it

'Holy Bible.' It's just as pretty as it can be. But we must be going, Harvey, Aunt Lydia will be worrrying."

"Wait a minute, Maude, I have just one more thing I want to call to your memory. Do you remember the gypsy that told our fortunes on commencement day at Ann Arbor?

"Yes, I should say so!"

"Well, she told me that I had just one chance to marry and otherwise I should live single."

"Yes, I remember that," said Maude, laughingly.

"Now, Maude, speaking about that little Bible, don't you suppose it's large enough to hold a family record?"

"Whose family, Harvey?" she said, suspecting his meaning but in a little doubt.

"Ours. Yours and mine," he replied.

She hesitated a moment and he continued:

"You may think about it a while, Maude, if you wish and give me your answer tomorrow."

"No, Harvey, I can answer you now as well as tomorrow. I have known you long enough to know whether I love you sufficiently to marry you or not, without having to stop to think about it."

"Your answer, then is ———?"

"Yes."

And above the sparkling waters of Rabbit river with his arms gently encircling her waist, they sealed their pledge of betrothal with a kiss, just as they had done ofttimes twenty-five years before.

"'Your answer then is—?'"—*Page 320.*

XXVIII.

THE CONCLUSION.

ALL Wayfield was happy. The wedding bells were ringing. There was rustling of silks and satins. The steady, solemn tones of the wedding march were sounding. The bride and groom stood beneath a beautiful arch of the loveliest flowers. A few short sentences and the vows were spoken. And now, it was Mr. and Mrs. Morgan.

Mabel Ladmoor and Rodney Boylan stood up with the contracting parties as bridesmaid and best man. After the ceremony was over, a reunion of old schoolmates was held; for as the reader will remember, Ferguson and his wife, Mabel Ladmoor, Rodney Boylan, DeEtta Bailing, and the newly married couple were of the party that, on the way home from school, had set a time for a reunion; and as fate would have it, it was just ten years ago this day that Morgan graduated. Every member of that former party was remembered and many were the expressions of sympathy for the former

leader of the Filer Quartet who had married the wayward Sanderson.

But three of that memorable party remained unmarried. They were Mabel Ladmoor, DeEtta Bailing and Rodney Boylan, and naturally, they were the butt of a great deal of good natured fun during the remainder of the evening. Strange to say, about a year later, the two last named became husband and wife, and Boylan is reported to be a very successful banker in an Indiana town, while Mabel Ladmoor is still a real good-natured old maid. Uncle Reuben and Aunt Lydia were unspeakably happy, and Morgan and his wife are frequent visitors at the old home.

Lena Whipple, poor girl, succumbed to the ravages of consumption a number of years ago, and her father was left alone in the world. He, too, was taken away by an acute attack of indigestion shortly after Morgan's wedding, and it later developed that he had, by his last will and testament, devised and bequeathed all of his vast estate to his only living relatives, Mrs. Morgan and her husband. Morgan's innocence was so completely proven that it did not even injure his political reputation, and the last reports are that he has been recently nominated

and elected to represent his district in the United States congress. Success in a general way and in a professional way has established for him a remunerative practice, and he is prouder than ever of his old friend, Ferguson, who in recognition of his marked ability, has just been appointed to fill a vacancy on the judicial bench of the United States district courts. And neither of these gentlemen ever fails to take advantage of an opportunity to visit Wayfield and enjoy a few days of recreation at the beloved home of their childhood.

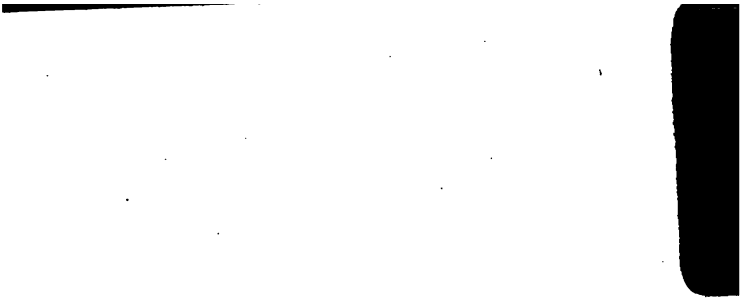
Down in the metropolis city there was a different state of affairs. As the shades of night were falling, two men were hastily ushered into a spacious building, assigned separate apartments, and the large key grated in the door as the guard bade them good-night.

The gloom of night came down upon them. Noises from the great city occasionally reached their retreat, but the narrow walls and the iron bars that closed the doorway were enough to make their cold hearts shudder.

Long into the night they sat in silent meditation and lived over the history of their last few years. For hours they sat in their cells watching the flickering rays of light that came

through between the bars that closed the doorway; and although their cells were side by side, neither ventured to say a word. At one time their attention was attracted by a feeble old lady who came up to each of their cells, gave them a look of scorn, and went away muttering, "I told you so," and they recognized her as the gypsy fortune-teller whom they had scorned many years before.

The lights were turned off and the two sat in darkness. They were wishing for a desire for sleep to come to their rescue. Just as the solemn tones of a distant clock sounded over the city the passing of the midnight hour, the voice of Hoskins aroused the attorney from his silent meditations: "Sandy, misery likes company. Let's bury the hatchet and be friends again. I will call it square if you will, and I want to jog your memory a little. You will remember that we made a bargain at the time of your graduation to have a reunion ten years later and talk over the ten years and our experiences during that time. Well, it was just ten years ago today that you graduated, Sandy. You remember you were going to congress; what do you think about it, now?"

"Yes," replied the attorney, "and I also remember you were going to marry Maude Halliday; but for God's sake, put the reunion off another ten years and turn over a new leaf," and the two unfortunates crouched back in the shadow of their cells, as the dull, heavy tread of the watchman sounded down the hallway; and as time dragged on, transgression was rewarded with vengeance and two more souls decided that "the way of the transgressor is hard."

THE END.